

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: **FROM VISION TO PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY OF WRITING PROJECT TEACHERS**

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2019

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This dissertation examines the experiences of three practicing teachers involved in a professional learning program focused on writing instruction as they envisioned and enacted new practices for teaching writing in their classrooms. A secondary aim of the study was to uncover the supports and barriers the teachers encountered as they attempted to implement their new ideas for improving their students’ writing in the midst of a reform-oriented literacy initiative in their high-needs school district. This study employed a qualitative multi-case study methodology to take an in-depth look at each teacher’s vision-to-practice process. Data sources from an examination of the visions, practices, and reflections of each of the three case study teachers included semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of documents produced during the professional learning program that captured teachers’ visions of good teaching.

Findings lend insights into the dilemmas that teachers experience assimilating new teaching practices within their existing theoretical perspectives, beliefs, and established principles of practice. Teachers selected new practices that were aligned with their theoretical perspectives of writing development which informed their beliefs about students' writing challenges and guided their implementation efforts in their classrooms. While beliefs about students' challenges remained mostly unexamined, teachers developed new practices to address their beliefs about how they could help students improve as writers. Teachers engaged in productive struggle to balance the competing demands of content coverage, fulfilling their professional responsibilities, and meeting their students' needs. Although teachers made different instructional decisions, they each prioritized preparing their students for their futures over other considerations. Teachers did not find many supports in their schools to encourage their efforts, and they experienced a lack of professional learning opportunities and a data-driven culture as barriers. Findings suggest that teachers require supports to enact professional identities as learners, knowers, and leaders within reform-oriented contexts. The study findings support the utility of teacher vision as a lens for examining practicing teachers' professional learning and growth.

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TEACHERS

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2019

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Acknowledgments

The journey through graduate school and to the completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of many people. I am grateful to my family and friends for motivating me to stay the course. I know my beloved grandmother Mary Moon would be especially proud of me today. To my two amazing children, Dylan and Julia, I want to thank you for always being in my corner. I'm so proud and humbled to be your Dr. Mom. I also want to thank my dear parents, Bob and Jean Moon, who set me on the path of lifelong learning through indulging my interests from an early age. Thank you for your example. To my husband Tim, thank you for all of the support you have given me throughout the many ups and downs of this process. I am lucky to be walking through this life with you by my side. Hand in hand, we can reach any summit.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee members for their thoughtful feedback, supportive guidance, and mentorship throughout this process. To Dr. McLaughlin, thank you for filling a critical role on this committee. To Dr. Eubanks, Dr. Peercy, and Dr. Turner, thank you for your questions, suggestions, and helpful feedback. I am grateful for the ways that each of you helped me to clarify my interests, pushed my thinking, and put me on the path to completing this project. To Dr. Maggie Peterson, thank you for being a true critical friend. Having you as a thinking partner has made me a better scholar, teacher, and person. I am especially grateful for my advisor, John O'Flahavan, who was there to provide encouragement at two critical points during my doctoral program: during my very first class and during this dissertation process. John, I thank you for always making time to listen and for your dedication to seeing me through.

Your influence has shaped the researcher and scholar that I am today. I also want to thank Dr. Joseph McCaleb and Dr. Patti Stock for their mentorship and for bringing me into the National Writing Project fold.

There are many Writing Project leaders and teacher consultants who provided the energy that fueled this project. To Maggie Peterson, Ann-Maire Maloney, Marybeth Shea, Michelle Koopman, Michelle McGee, and Shana Sterkin, I could not have asked for a more inspiring or dedicated group of superwomen to work alongside. I also owe a special note of gratitude to the three teacher consultants who participated in this study and gave countless hours of their time to this project. I have the deepest respect and affection for you and for your students whose voices bring this work to life.

I also want to recognize my network for the support I have received throughout my time in graduate school. For more than a decade, I have lived with one foot in two worlds. I want to thank my teacher friends, and especially Mark Dunbar, for keeping my questions firmly grounded in the day-to-day concerns of teachers. To my fellow graduate students, Maggie Peterson, Sarah Morris, Thor Gibbins, Becky Hessong Grove, Lisa Swan, and Erin McCardle, I could not have asked for more generous, thoughtful, or interesting people to make this journey with. The horse rides may be over, but the friendships remain.

And finally, I want to extend heartfelt appreciation to all of my students, past and present, who have inspired me with their eager questions and sense of wonder to never stop learning.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Teacher professional learning is a critical component of education reform (Darling-Hammond, Hylar, & Gardner, 2017; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001; Hord, 1997; Lieberman & Mace, 2008; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Westheimer, 2008). Most educators recognize that systemic reform policies aimed at producing complex student learning outcomes present a challenge for teacher learning, including changes to deeply held beliefs, knowledge, and practices (Ball, 1988; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Grossman et al., 2001; Thompson & Zeuli, 1999). Historically, the trajectory of professional learning and development required to adapt to reform-oriented agendas has been exceedingly complex and frequently unsuccessful (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Grossman et al., 2001; Nelson & Hammerman, 1996; Valli et al., 2008). Even teachers who are motivated to make changes face persistent challenges associated with enacting new learning, including unlearning routinized practices and balancing competing demands. It is also well established that teachers often face the *problem of enactment*, a phenomenon that occurs when teachers appear to embrace a new idea yet continue enacting a previous practice out of habit (Ball, 1988; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005; Kennedy, 1998; 1999, 2005; Lampert, 2010; Zimmerman, 2017).

Provided the proper supports and conditions, curricular reform efforts such as the adoption of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS) have the potential to inspire professional learning as teachers reach for new practices and new roles as well as

deepen their understanding of curricular material through engaging in *productive struggle* toward new learning (Frykholm, 2004; Lytle, 2013; Peercy et al., 2017). There is general agreement that sophisticated forms of teaching are required to develop the 21st Century competencies of the Common Core State Standards Initiative and implicit in recent curricular reform agendas; yet many important questions remain about how teachers can learn these skills (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Given the increased demands for addressing curricular reform, we need to know more about engaging teachers themselves in the complex process of envisioning and enacting their own learning for improvement, which is the subject of this dissertation.

Vision, Education Reform and the Focus of This Study

Since the 1990's, research on education reform has established the critical role *vision* plays in reform work (Evans, 1996; Hammerness, 2009). While the term *vision* has become a buzzword used loosely in education settings, education experts argue for its significance in making reform work meaningful for those involved (Evans, 1996; Hammerness, 2001). The term *vision* is recognized as related but distinctly different from the concepts of *mission* and *core values* (Evans, 1996). While mission refers to having a basic purpose and core values represents underlying beliefs and principles, vision specifically refers to future direction (Evans, 1996; Hammerness, 2006). While much of the research and scholarship on the role of vision in reform contexts has focused on the perspectives of educational leaders, individual teacher's visions have not received the same attention (Hammerness, 2010). The work of making changes to classroom practice, however, falls on the shoulders of teachers who are the ultimate agents of reform (Borko, 2004; Kennedy, 1998, 2005; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Spillane, 1999).

There is plenty of research to support that reform efforts including professional learning opportunities have provided tangible guidance for teachers to make improvements in their classrooms but have failed to gain traction (Applebee, 1991; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Kennedy, 2005; Spillane, 1999). One explanation is that reform ideals are presented to teachers in ways that are not realistic (Kennedy, 2005). Another explanation is that teachers' own beliefs and values are different from those of reformers (Kennedy, 1991; Kennedy, 2005). While teachers are often portrayed as the problem, they take accountability agendas quite seriously even when under increased pressure and in unsupportive conditions (Valli et al., 2008). However, teachers are infrequently positioned as “knowers” in reform-oriented contexts, involved in developing their own questions or theorizing their own roles or practices for change (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

With its emphasis on teacher authority and self-directed inquiry, the National Writing Project positions professional teaching practice as an “intellectual process of posing and exploring problems identified by teachers themselves” (Cochran-Smyth & Lytle, 1993, p. 9). Historically, the National Writing Project has worked to develop the interdependence of all writing teachers as a collective approach to reform (Smith, 1996). Within this model of teacher learning, teachers see the importance of their work to all other teachers and to the collective improvement of practice (Gray, 2000). Cochran-Smyth & Lytle (1993) further argue that teachers' own voices, their own questions, and the “interpretive frames that teachers use to understand and improve their own classroom practices” are missing from the discussion of what counts as knowledge (p.7).

This is the argument that informed the mission of the professional development site of the National Writing Project that provides the professional learning context for this study. Within these goals for professional practice, teachers as learners and knowers engage in teacher inquiry to develop their own questions and create their own interpretive frames within a community. I argue that within these frames, teachers have an opportunity to examine their own teaching practices and to develop their own knowledge within, but not subject to, overarching reform-oriented initiatives. For the purposes of this study, the term *inquiry* refers to teachers' own questions and frameworks for understanding and improving their own teaching practice.

Similarly, this study examines teachers' visions for how they play a key role in connecting teachers' values, beliefs, and aspirations to their own ideas for improvement. Teacher vision has been theorized and studied as a component of teacher identity as well as a tool for teacher learning and development. The growing body of literature on the role of teacher vision reflects a range of understandings about the role, nature, and scope of teachers' visions in shaping their work. Across studies and conceptual scholarship, visions are a way to connect teacher's beliefs and aspirations to their teaching practice. A thorough review of the relevant theoretical scholarship and empirical studies of teacher vision will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. In brief, the term teacher vision has been used to describe representations of imagined future teaching practice (Duffy, 2002; Hammerness, 1999, 2006; Kennedy, 2006; McElhone, Hebard, Scott, & Juel, 2009; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Squires & Bliss, 2004; Turner, 2006, 2007; Whitcomb, 2004). These representations have been found to be highly individual and to exist on a continuum from the more abstract and ideal to the more concrete and practical. For pre-

service and novice teachers, studies demonstrate that idealized visions of classroom experience may serve as a goal to strive for and serve as a touchstone for evaluating professional progress over time and against others (Hammerness, 2006; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Capturing ideal visions through a process known as *visioning* is a teacher education method for encouraging novice teachers to formulate, articulate, and examine their overall teaching mission as it is grounded in their moral purpose and personal beliefs (Duffy, 2002; Hammerness, 2006). Teacher visions serve as a point of reference for instructional decision making as well as a means to reveal mismatches between a teacher's beliefs and the school context (Hammerness, 2006). Most of the theory and research on teacher vision, however, has focused on the visions of pre-service and early career teachers leaving a gap in the research on how practicing teachers use their visions to guide their own professional learning and development within reform-oriented contexts which is a primary focus of this study.

Through a review of the small body of scholarship on practicing teachers' visions and my own observations as a teacher and teacher development leader, I argue that rather than static portraits of ideal classroom situations, practicing teachers' visions are complex, active, and malleable. When activated in a professional learning context, such as the professional learning program that provides the setting for this study, visions may serve as a driver and resource for further professional learning, knowledge production, and changes to practice. It has been argued that the reason change efforts in schools are unsuccessful has been the failure of leaders to move vision from an idea into practice; in other words, to give direction to a vision through a "continuous stream of actions" (Evans, 1996, p. 207). Drawing on this distinction and Hammerness's (2009) definition of

teacher vision as images of ideal classroom practice which represent a kind of “reach” for teachers, for the purpose of this study, *teacher vision* is understood to mean images of teaching practices and roles which serve as a kind of “reach” for practicing teachers in their pursuit of improvement within their classrooms and broader education contexts.

Teacher vision may be understood as uniquely individual, coming from within, and providing a way to measure past and current practice as they serve as a “productive guide for future practice” (Hammerness, 2006, p. 3). However, teacher vision has been found to vary greatly in terms of clarity, focus, and distance in relation to a teacher’s current teaching practice and context (Hammerness, 2001). I contend that visions are unlikely to generate traction for change without critical examination of practice. If visions provide representations of future practice, examining them may allow teachers to probe tacit understanding and productively critique their own teaching practices to identify opportunities for new learning (Hammerness, 2006; Schon, 1984). It was an assumption of this study that, in contrast to the idealistic visions of pre-service teachers who have limited exposure to imagining and designing instruction, practicing teachers’ visions are more focused on the realities of classroom experience and may be used for what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) refer to as *knowledge-of-practice*, or deep knowledge that is created through shared inquiry, reflection, and critique. To gain a better understanding of the interaction among these elements as they provided direction for teachers’ actions toward implementation of their own inquiry into their practice was an important aim of this study.

Purpose and Research Questions

This case study investigated the experiences of three teacher participants enrolled in a professional learning program for improving writing instruction. This program was designed to address a reform-oriented literacy initiative within the high-needs school district in which these teachers worked. The literacy goals of the initiative were aligned to the Common Core State Standards and included new expectations for teaching writing across grade levels and subject areas. The professional learning program adopted an inquiry-focused approach to teacher learning with the aim of equipping teachers with resources and supports to envision and enact their own ideas for improving their writing instruction. This study was designed to better understand how teachers' visions for improvement could be used as a guide and a source of learning within their teaching practice. An assumption of this study was that developing a strong vision and identifying resources and supports for enacting that vision could provide direction for teachers to address some of the persistent challenges associated with making practice-based changes within reform-oriented school contexts.

How teachers conceptualized their own visions for inquiry into their practices and what actions they took to enact those visions was the phenomenon examined in this study. A secondary aim of the study was to understand the contextual factors inside and outside of the classroom that teachers perceived as either supporting or presenting barriers to their enactments. As the professional learning program's focus was on writing instruction, the process of writing provides the area of interest and the curricular context of this study. The following questions guided this study:

1. How do teachers participating in a professional learning community focused on writing instruction envision an inquiry for improving writing in their teaching practice?
2. How do teachers enact their vision into their practice of teaching writing?
3. What are the main supports and barriers teachers experience during the process of enacting their vision for teaching writing?

To address these questions, I used qualitative multi-case study methodology (Merriam, 2009) to take an in-depth look at the experiences of three teachers within a professional learning program cohort. The study is interpretive in nature, describing teachers' experiences through their own perspectives rather than examining the effects of their practice on student achievement. An assumption of this study was that teachers' experiences of implementing their inquiry were influenced by contextual conditions and factors. Case study is particularly appropriate when the phenomenon of interest is context-dependent (Merriam, 2009). Because complex contextual factors were highly relevant to the phenomenon of study, a wide range of factors, both inside and outside the classroom, were examined through multiple methods including interview, group interview, and classroom observation for a nuanced understanding of the supports and barriers teachers faced.

Potential Contributions

This study has the potential to contribute to teacher professional learning and education reform research. As the problem statement indicates, while teacher learning is considered a key component of education reform, not enough is known about the process and conditions that support or do not support teachers to act upon what they have learned.

While much is known about how teachers learn traditional practices, we do not know enough about how teachers can learn “*different* practices – how to interpret particular situations differently and how to respond differently to the situations they face” (emphasis in original, Kennedy, 1998, p. 4). This study has the potential to contribute to our understanding of what teachers experience as they envision and implement different practices, which is at the heart of reform. This study will also add to the general body of literature on teacher learning and the enactment of learning in practice, making a specific contribution to the literature on enactment of teacher inquiry in the area of writing instruction which is an under-researched area in the reform literature. Additionally, we need to know more about how practicing teachers utilize their visions as a mode of examining and motivating professional learning and developing of knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). As the teachers in this study are practicing teachers, findings of this study build on the more developed body of research on novice teachers’ visions to consider in what ways practicing teachers portray a more fine-grained and dynamic representations of their future teaching practice through their participation in professional learning experiences.

Examining the actions that practicing teachers take as they implement their visions for their classroom practice is also an under-researched area. Practitioner-research studies of *visioning*, or the surfacing of teacher visions through writing prompts aimed at encouraging prospective teachers to articulate and examine images of their ideal classrooms, in the pre-service methods classroom have demonstrated its usefulness as a “reach” for early-career teachers (Duffy, 2002; McElhone et.al, 2009). This study provides needed insights into how exactly practicing teachers make use of their visions in

the process of identifying, conceptualizing, inquiring, and reaching to implement new practices in their classrooms. During this time of increased pressure to address the area of writing across content areas, the question of how visions help guide practicing teachers' actions and what actions they take to implement their vision-in-practice warrants attention.

Policy changes alone have not successfully altered the instruction in classrooms to reach 21st Century learning goals (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), yet there is an urgent need to understand and address the persistently low achievement of American students in the area of writing, which is considered critical for meeting 21st Century demands including college and workplace success (Graham, Harris, & Herbert, 2011; NCES, 2012; NCWAS, 2003; 2006). These factors call for a better understanding of the interaction of top-down conditions shaped by policy and the experiences of teachers as they strive to implement teacher inquiry and “reform” from the bottom-up. Given the lack of research on how practicing teachers use their own visions for writing instruction improvement, it is my hope that this study makes a contribution to research, practice, and professional development by providing an in-depth look at individual teacher's processes as they take action to envision and make practice-based changes in their classrooms.

Organization of this Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into eight chapters. This chapter provides an overview of the topic, presents the rationale, phenomenon of interest, research questions and potential significance of the research. In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature that informed this study and present the conceptual

framework that guided the research design. In Chapter 3, I describe my approach to case study research and the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures that grounded this study, providing a rationale for my approach. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 describe each of the three cases that make up this study of Writing Project teachers. Chapter 7 addresses the third research question of the barriers and supports teachers experienced during the enactment of their visions. In Chapter 8, I present a cross-case analysis of teachers' cases followed by conclusions and implications.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature begins with the theoretical foundation of sociocultural theory and the theories of teacher learning and teacher vision that provide the theoretical grounding for this study. I critically examine conceptions of teacher knowledge, teacher learning, and teacher vision that have informed research and professional development approaches including the professional development initiative that provides the context for the proposed study. Then, I examine the research related to teacher vision, writing instruction reform, and the supports and barriers to the enactment of envisioned changes to practice that have informed the development of my study. Finally, I outline a conceptual framework of the factors that potentially influence teachers' enactments of their visions and describe my assumptions about the influence of these factors on teachers' actions.

Sociocultural Theory of Learning

With the growing acceptance of sociocultural theories of learning, there has been a shift in the understanding of how practicing teachers learn and develop their craft. Sociocultural approaches to learning are grounded in the ideas and research of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978), who theorized that learning is more than an intellectual act of acquiring new information through cognitive processes. It is also a social phenomenon, occurring through the interrelationship and interdependence of cognitive function and social interaction. Vygotsky's theoretical framework reflects the notion that higher mental processes, such as enacting teacher vision, are developed through social participation (Wertsch, 1985). These processes may be understood through the semiotic processes, tools, and sign systems used to mediate them during the meaning-

making process (Wertsch, 1985). Vygotsky rejected the practice of isolating individual and social phenomena in social science research, arguing that semiotic processes are part of both individual and social processes and serve “to build a bridge between them” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 16).

While teacher learning has often been treated as an individual cognitive process within teacher education and professional development approaches, as will be discussed further, sociocultural theories of learning situate learning within broader cultural and historical contexts. Therefore, in order to study teacher learning through a sociocultural lens, teacher knowing and teacher knowledge may be viewed through teachers’ purposeful interactions within their classrooms, schools, and professional communities and mediated by the tools of the culture (Borko, 2004; Putnam & Borko, 2000). For teachers, these tools include the symbolic representations of speech and writing that teacher-learners use to make meaning about their practice. This study is grounded in the assumption that teachers’ inquiry ideas are envisioned, constructed, and enacted within the context of the social interactions they engage in through their professional learning communities and school communities with fellow teachers and with students in their classrooms.

Likewise, within the contexts of classrooms as learning communities, researchers interested in a sociocultural perspective view writing, writing development, and the teaching of writing as a social practice within a community whereby students and teachers “collaboratively construct classroom rhetorical contexts for writing to and for familiar audiences” (Beach, Newell, & VanDerHeide, 2016, p. 88). Through this perspective, writing development is viewed through the ways that students learn to make

decisions related to topic, genre, audience, and purpose as an act of problem-solving and for making rhetorical decisions not simply as textual or cognitive processes (Beach et al., 2016). This study examines the teaching of writing and the process of learning to write as a constantly evolving process of engagement with social activities that lead to a growing understanding of social participation (Beach et al., 2016). As such, this study endeavors to take an expansive view of writing as it serves as a connecting social thread within the classroom space, students and teachers' lives, and within larger social and political contexts.

I turn now to the scholarship on teacher learning to examine how vision has been theorized as an element of teacher learning and to portray how visions are developed within social, historical, and political contexts including reform-oriented initiatives. Through the following review of conceptual and empirical scholarship on teacher knowledge, teacher learning, and the role of teacher vision in teacher professional development, I seek to identify salient factors contributing to the teacher-as-learner's experience and identify those factors which may support or present barriers to their enactments of inquiry into their teaching practice, the focus of this study.

Teacher Knowledge and Reform Initiatives

Developing teacher knowledge holds the key to education reform (Feiman-Nemser, 2008; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017); however, there remain very different conceptions of teacher knowledge that have been used to construct, evaluate, and justify reform initiatives (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Lieberman, 1995). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) offer a useful framework for examining conceptions of teacher knowledge “based on the images and assumptions that underlie methods and on the educational

purposes that drive various teacher learning initiatives” (p. 251). These conceptions shed light on the related literature on the teacher knowledge-practice relationship and are helpful for considering how teachers have been positioned in terms of their role in reform contexts. The Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) framework traces

- Conceptions of teacher learning and the knowledge-practice relationship
- Images of knowledge
- Images of teachers, teaching, and professional practice
- Images of teacher learning and teachers’ roles in educational change (p. 253).

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) describe three conceptions of teacher knowledge.

The first conception is *knowledge-for-practice*. Within this paradigm, knowledge about teaching consists of formal knowledge about the content, foundations of teaching and learning theory, and empirically-based best practices. This knowledge is created by outsider researchers to be accessed and applied by teachers to their classroom practice.

Within this paradigm, there is a codified knowledge base that teachers learn from experts.

Teacher insights are valued, but teachers are not positioned as generators of knowledge.

In this sense, teachers use knowledge they have learned to solve problems rather than pose their own problems for inquiry. Over time, the accomplished teacher grows professionally through a process of linking previous knowledge to new learning. The goal

of this learning is to develop deeper content understandings, new skill sets, and specific pedagogy for teaching. Professional development experiences that utilize this theory of teacher knowledge include the trainer model whereby experts impart specific strategies to teachers, often decontextualized from practice settings. The goal of a knowledge-for-

practice approach to teacher learning is to elevate the profession through the development of an official body of knowledge for teaching practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

The second paradigm of teacher knowledge is *knowledge-in-practice* (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). In contrast to the knowledge-for-practice's focus on the "what" of teacher knowledge, the knowledge-in-practice framework focuses on the "how" of teaching. Knowledge is seen as action embedded in practice. Knowledge use and knowledge creation are blurred as teachers create knowledge of "craft" through reflection on their actions and decisions and through the explication of their tacit knowledge. Drawing on Schon's (1995) conception of "tacit knowing-in-action" Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) posit that knowledge-in-practice is derived within the expertise of accomplished teachers (p. 29). In terms of learning and professional development, through this construct, teachers learn from an examination of their own teaching and through self-reflective practices. In this sense, teaching cannot be taught as a body of knowledge but may be learned through self-study and emulation of accomplished teachers. Professional development models include coaching models, mentorships, and demonstrations of practice. Within this framework, the goal is to probe one's own teaching in order to deepen knowledge for classroom application.

Finally, the *knowledge-of-practice* framework is Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) reimagining of teacher-learning through an inquiry focus that positions teachers as learners within a sociocultural frame. Drawing on the practitioner research tradition, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) describe teacher inquiry as a way of knowing that is useful to both local contexts and within the larger education community. The knowledge-of-practice paradigm problematizes both the traditional academic knowledge-for-practice

approach to teacher learning as well as the practitioner focused knowledge-in-practice approach. Grounding their framework in sociocultural theory, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) contend that knowledge is situated and cannot be separated from the knower, and knowledge construction cannot be separated from its larger political and social contexts. Significantly, the knowledge-of-practice framework positions the teacher-learner as the agent and critic of all sources of knowledge. Through this stance, teachers learn by developing and challenging their own questions, interpretations, and practices through an inquiry process.

As is the case with the teacher professional development program that situates this study, teacher learning in the knowledge-of-practice paradigm is fostered through collaborative interactions where knowledge is socially constructed through the co-mingling of experiences, histories, and resources. Professional learning communities are seen as playing a critical role in knowledge creation as questions are gleaned from classroom practice, knowledge is transmitted through social practices into practitioner research, and then returned to classroom practice in an ongoing, iterative loop (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Through engaging in these practices of teacher learning, the goal is for teachers to gain an expanded view of what practice means that supports the notion of teaching as agency.

Although Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) do not use the term *vision* in their framework, they position teachers as the agents of their own professional learning and emphasize the inquiry-to-practice process for knowledge creation that has informed my conception of the role of inquiry in the *vision-to-practice process*. Within the knowledge-of-practice framework, the goal of teacher learning is to examine practices critically and

publicly for the purpose of taking action in classrooms, schools, districts, and the larger education community. Lytle (2013) contends that theory and practice offer a reciprocal relationship for practitioners to consider the question: “What visions do you attach your teaching to?” (p. xvi).

Teacher Learning

While there are many theoretical frameworks for conceptualizing teacher learning and development (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999; Hammerness et al., 2005; Shulman & Shulman, 2004), most existing frameworks stop short of viewing teacher learning through Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999) knowledge-of-practice lens. For the purposes of this study, teacher learning will be examined through the ways teachers develop knowledge within larger educational contexts such as through their participation in professional learning experiences, school communities, and systemic reform initiatives. Through a sociocultural lens, these contexts cannot be separated from teacher experience and therefore are included within the scope of this study.

Increasingly, teacher learning models and theories designed for teacher education purposes incorporate *vision* as an integral element of teacher learning aligned with conceptions of the teacher knowledge-of-practice paradigm (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2001, 2012; Hammerness et al., 2005; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Feiman-Nemser (2012) and Hammerness et al. (2005) argue that constructing visions to inspire and guide professional learning and practice is a central task of preservice preparation. Because prospective teachers bring with them visions of traditional models of teaching and learning they have learned from their own years as

students known as the *apprenticeship of observation* (Kennedy, 1998; Lortie, 1975), it is a critical role of teacher education to provide opportunities for the examination and critique of these images of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Hammerness et al., 2005). Teacher educators are also called upon to provide opportunities for prospective teachers to develop new visions that will guide and inspire their professional learning and development across their teaching careers (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Hammerness, 2006; Kennedy, 1998). Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) argued that prospective teachers need to develop *curricular visions*, in particular, to inform their own professional stances when faced with “many competing visions of learning and of curriculum [that] exist in and around schools” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005, p. 183). This is particularly relevant to the proposed study because of the focus on the specific curricular area of writing which has historically been subject to competing visions about what should be taught and how it should be taught (Kennedy, 1998).

These teacher learning models suggest the significant role that professional learning experiences could play in supporting practicing teachers to develop visions of their future teaching practice and to position themselves as agents of their own professional growth. Preservice teachers are not alone in holding onto visions of traditional teaching practices - practicing teachers’ traditional images of teaching and learning have been found to be quite intractable in reform contexts (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Kennedy, 1998, 2005;). We need to know more about how to activate and support practicing teacher visions that may otherwise remain unexamined outside of professional learning contexts. These pre-service teacher learning models suggest but do not confirm that activating and developing a strong vision may

provide practicing teachers with a professional standpoint for critiquing their own and others' assumptions about what constitutes good teaching in reform contexts.

Shulman and Shulman's (2004) framework, which provided the theoretical foundation for Hammerness's (2001, 2004, 2006, 2008) in-depth research on the role of teachers' visions in their professional work, is one of the few that focuses specifically on practicing teachers and situates learning within a reform context. This framework was designed to theorize and scale-up the implementation of a reform-oriented model of teacher professional development, Fostering Communities of Teachers as Learners (FCTL), and utilized for supporting constructivist (or other forms of highly engaged) teaching principles (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). The researchers adopted a new perspective on teacher-learning for this framework rather than extending their well-known earlier work on *pedagogical content knowledge* and *pedagogical reasoning and action* (Shulman, 1986, 1987). Instead, the FCTL framework broadens conceptions of teacher learning to situate it within communities and institutional contexts.

Within this framework, the teacher-learner's development is viewed through interrelated personal and professional dimensions of *vision*, *motivation*, *understanding*, and *practice* with the dimension of *reflection* at the center (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). *Vision* is associated with readiness to adopt an ideological stance towards teaching and learning in line with the constructivist principles of FCTL. Within this framework, accomplished teachers assume a reflective stance whereby they evaluate, review, self-criticize and learn from experience within situated learning contexts.

Although there are limitations to this framework, it has informed the development of the conceptual framework for this study, positioning teacher learning within the

context of a professional community and policy-related resources and conditions. It is the only teacher learning frameworks grounded in studies of practicing teachers that also recognizes the significant role of vision in lifelong teacher learning. One limitation of this framework, however, is that the individual teacher's vision is defined in terms of their readiness to adopt an institutional vision rather than positioning teachers as agents within school and broader institutional contexts. Consequently, Shulman and Shulman (2004) raise but do not answer the two pivotal questions: how might teachers-as-learners use their vision to develop critical practices through their interactions within their learning and teaching communities, and how might these practices support their capacity to enact their own visions in their classrooms?

Teacher Vision

Most of the literature on teacher vision builds on Hammerness's (1999, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009) longitudinal study of pre-service, early career, and practicing teachers' visions. Inspired to better understand differences in the effectiveness of teachers who had equally strong content knowledge and pedagogy in the Fostering Communities of Teachers as Learners studies (See J. H. Shulman, 2004), Hammerness (2006) theorized that there was a missing construct to be examined: teacher vision. Hammerness's research focused on describing the role that vision played in teachers' lives and work as well as investigating the tension between teachers' ideals and their current practice. The study also revealed implications of those tensions on teachers' professional growth and sense of professional satisfaction.

Hammerness' (2006) findings indicated that teachers' visions play a significant role in their lives and their work. While they are highly personal and varied, visions are

more than hopes or philosophies but concrete images of practice, bringing together teachers' passions and aspirations with their understandings. In the conceptual literature, visions have been linked to teacher intentions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Kennedy, 2006) and to explicit and implicit decision-making practices as they occur during both planning and interactive phases of teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Kennedy, 2006). Kennedy (2006) theorized that teachers' visions allow them to navigate classroom events as they unfold and provide a mental map for adapting to classroom situations and concerns as they arise. Hammerness' (2006) findings support that visions connect imagined future teaching practice with teaching context through five domains of professional practice.

Teachers struggle to balance the changing demands of their subject matter with the unpredictability of their students' needs (Hammerness, 2006). While striking the right balance between these tensions is difficult, examining visions-in-practice reveals how teachers understand, prioritize, and respond to these demands. In order to activate teachers' visions across these competing domains, Hammerness examined how teachers described ideal images of: (a) the classroom environment, (b) the role of the teacher, (c) the role of students, (d) the relationship between curriculum and student learning, and (e) the relationship between the classroom and society (Hammerness, 2006). For example, one teacher described her visions of students engaged in independent learning, her role as a facilitator and coach, her desire to know her students' stories, and her interest in close collegial relationships. The teacher's description of a successful research activity where she facilitated independent learning and shared authority with her students over their learning suggested that her practice was close to her vision and encouraged her to

continue to work toward being a more effective coach in the classroom. While this teacher's vision was motivational, Hammerness (2006) found that the perceived distance between vision and practice may also lead to discouragement and even resignation and feelings of defeat.

While teachers use their visions as a guide for future practice and regard their visions as representing a "consciousness of possibility" (Greene, 1988 as cited in Hammerness, 2006), teachers also tap their visions as a tool for reflection and use them as a measuring stick to evaluate past activities for successes and areas of improvement. Consistent with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) knowledge-of-practice paradigm, teachers' visions serve as a means for expanding conceptions of good teaching through reflection and critical examination. Rather than static images, teachers' ability to expand their visions to address both subject matter and student demands as well as their work to bridge the gap between their vision and their current context determined the degree to which teachers were able to improve their practice and to feel satisfied in their work (Hammerness, 2006).

Methodological questions of how to effectively capture teacher vision through data collection and data analysis were explicitly addressed in this study and have since been replicated in the studies that followed. Strengths of this study included the use of multiple data sources including survey, vision statements, multiple interviews, and classroom observations over time. These methods provided "a number of windows into teachers' visions and a number of occasions on which to check the reliability of the picture of their visions that were emerging" (Hammerness, 2006, p. 91). Although there were only a few portrait cases that included rich descriptions of teachers' experiences, the

longitudinal approach demonstrated that teacher vision is a relevant construct for examining teacher practice across a teaching career and should not be limited to studies of pre-service and early career teachers. *Visioning*, which refers to activating images of future teaching practice through responding to a writing prompt or an interview protocol, served as a valid method for surfacing teachers' images of their future classroom across the five dimensions of professional practice previously described. This method has been replicated and effectively modified by other researchers for examining visions under specific conditions.

Additionally, Hammerness' (2006) vision dimensions have proved useful for data analysis purposes. Descriptive studies examined vision across the dimensions of *focus* of the vision which refers to the specific subject or area of interest, *range* of the vision which refers to how broad or narrowly focused is the vision (e.g., an individual classroom versus the community), and *distance* which refers to how close or how far the vision is from what a teacher is already doing in her current practice. Findings revealed complex constellations, or patterns, that have distinguished teachers' perceptions of their progress toward enacting their visions (Hammerness, 1999, 2006; McElhone et al., 2009) as well as demonstrated growth in practice over time (McElhone et al., 2009).

This foundational study of teacher vision concluded that activating and developing teachers' visions could play a valuable role in teacher education and professional development experiences as a means of examining and expanding assumptions and beliefs about teaching. Hammerness (2006) conception of vision has informed my selection of vision as a lens for understanding how teachers are engaged in a learning cycle as they envision, take action, and continuously reflect on their practice.

Through meaningful learning and interactions, teachers expand their visions of what is possible. Personal visions provide teachers with a starting point for changing their practice and therefore suggest that they would provide a useful construct for examining teachers' processes of implementing what they learn from their own inquiry.

Follow-up studies by teacher education instructors in the practitioner-research tradition have used the process of vision-building in their methods classes with their pre-service and early career teacher-students. These studies examined vision-building as a pedagogical tool to aid new teachers in the development of professional dispositions including independent thinking (Duffy, 2002; Zimmerman, 2017), cultural responsiveness (Turner, 2006; 2007), and reflectiveness (Parsons & La Croix, 2013) as well as content knowledge focusing on literacy (Grossman et al., 2000; McElhone et al., 2009; Parsons & La Croix, 2013; Turner, 2007). These studies offer insights into the role of vision in teacher learning and development and connect to my study through the way that the practitioner-researchers apply the construct of vision to specific teacher development goals within the context of diverse learning environments.

In the only study that focused specifically on reform-oriented writing instruction, teacher vision, and also examined enactment of vision in practice, Grossman et al. (2000) followed 10 beginning teachers in a longitudinal study over four years to find out how they learned to teach language arts. The study began during the final year of their preservice education and continued into the first three years of their early careers. The case studies used interviews and classroom observation to examine how teachers referred back to their teacher education program to develop their instruction over time. The researchers found that early career teachers struggled to attain their visions during their

first year of teaching. However, they continued to use teacher education experiences as the source of visions of ideal practice during their early career. The pedagogical tools teachers developed during the teacher education experiences provided a lens for preservice teachers to visualize and make sense of their classroom experiences over time once they had a chance to experiment. This finding is significant in that it suggests that the development of tools that reference visions of idealized teaching may continue to support teachers process of taking action to reach for their visions through periods of productive struggle and learning.

Duffy (2002) theorized the relationship between *visioning* and the characteristics of outstanding teachers through his work with pre-service teachers. In line with Hammerness' findings, Duffy posited that in order to become outstanding, pre-service teachers needed more than pedagogical competence. Drawing on studies of teachers' knowledge structures and studies of teacher narratives and life stories, Duffy conceived the visioning process as a method to develop "a teacher's conscious sense of self, of one's work, and one's mission" ... [a] personal stance on teaching that rises from deep within the inner teacher and fuels independent thinking" (p. 334). Duffy's sense of teacher vision is rooted in teacher judgment, a "particular standpoint" from which teachers make professional decisions (p. 333). The goal of *visioning* in this study was for teachers to develop a strong sense of their purpose for teaching and to stake a claim to their commitments. In so doing, Duffy posited that pre-service teachers would be empowered to make decisions consistent with their personal morals and passions in the face of the many uncertainties novice teachers face in the classroom. Although Duffy did not claim any results from this study, he hypothesized that challenging pre-service teachers to

develop psychological strength in their decision-making holds the key to their ability to be inventive and adaptive teachers able to resist pressure to conform.

The goal of Duffy's (2002) research, although not stated directly, was to explore the long-term impact of vision on the independent stances of teachers during preservice education. This study was primarily focused on describing the process used to surface pre-service teachers' visions through an assigned vision paper and to argue for the value of visioning as a teacher education method. A limitation to the study was the lack of in-depth analysis of pre-service teachers' visions for subtle differences. In particular, although Duffy (2002) conceded that many pre-service teachers did not see the purpose of visioning while students in his methods class, all of the vision statements described attested to the value of vision in decision-making. Another limitation is a lack of counter examples of teachers whose visions did not prove useful or whose visions were out of their reach due to personal or contextual factors. As Hammerness (2006) warns, not all visions are inspiring and instead may serve to reveal the distance, at times insurmountable, between a teacher's ideal and current practice. In closing, Duffy stated that visioning was a hypothesis and called for the validity of his hypothesis to be established through a research agenda.

Squires and Bliss (2004) also used Hammerness's conception of vision as a way of investigating the contrast between *espoused ideals*, which refer to teachers' values about teaching and learning, and teachers' *immediate concerns*, which refer to the ideas that they evidence in their responses to situations that arise in the classroom (Kennedy, 2006). The researchers made assumptions about teachers' theoretical beliefs based on interviews and their analysis of teacher practices. This analysis revealed a discrepancy

between what one teacher reported to believe and the practices that she employed in her reading instruction. The researchers concluded that the teacher's practices evaded categorization, and they turned to teacher visioning as a method to dig deeper and to reexamine her teaching practices in a more holistic manner. Squires and Bliss (2004) assigned interview responses to categories of Hammerness's (2001) vision dimensions (focus, distance, and range) and found a more complex depiction of teacher practice than previously discerned. This analysis revealed that there was a cohesion between the teacher's vision of her ideal classroom and her actual classroom. Using the visioning process provided insights into the reasons behind the teacher's choices. The researchers concluded that the visioning process led to an examination of deeply held beliefs about teaching and learning and that using vision as a lens may reveal deeper meaning behind teachers' beliefs (Squires & Bliss, 2004).

Drawing on the work of Hammerness (2001, 2003, 2004) and Duffy (2002), Turner (2007) also turned to the construct of teacher vision to foster cultural awareness and challenge pre-service teachers' assumptions about cultural diversity in her elementary reading methods class. Drawing on the practitioner-research tradition, Turner described the visions of culturally responsive literacy instruction of prospective teachers enrolled in a literacy methods course. Drawing on the visioning process method set forth by Hammerness (2003), Duffy (2002), Squires and Bliss (2004), and others, Turner included the pedagogical process of visioning as a focus project in her course and primary data source for the study. Recognizing that novice teachers "need support in developing and articulating productive visions of practice, particularly when they are working with diverse students," Turner (2007) amended Hammerness's (2006) vision prompt to include

questions about cultural beliefs and culturally responsive teaching practices illustrating that visioning may serve as a strategy for focusing a lens on a specific aspect of teacher practice (p. 14).

Twenty pre-service teachers were included in the study, representing a racially and ethnically diverse group of graduate students. Findings from the study indicated several revealing themes across subjects including the value students placed on developing literacy communities in the classroom and the importance of learner-centered curriculum, for example (Turner, 2007). Turner also found that preservice teachers held “conflicting, even contradictory, views” about classroom management and parental involvement, two significant areas of concern for culturally responsive teaching in literacy which she termed *blind spots* in prospective teachers’ visions (Hammerness, 2003; Turner, 2007, p. 16). A strength of this qualitative research was the triangulation of multiple sources of data including observation, researcher’s notes, and analytic memos along with students’ vision papers. Another strength was the use of multiple phases of analysis in deriving and confirming themes. While several studies focused only on the motivational influence of vision, Turner contributed to the research on visioning through interrogating what was missing or contradictory in teachers’ visions as well.

Duffy (2002), Squires and Bliss (2004), and Turner (2007) describe a method for developing and capturing pre-service teachers’ visions of good teaching in the literacy classroom through the process of visioning. These studies set the stage for future studies that incorporated observation in preservice teachers’ field placements to further investigate the vision-to-practice relationship. As the literature suggests, teachers’ theories-in-action, or what they show in practice, and their espoused theories, or what

they say they will do when they speak about how they will practice their profession, may be quite different (Kennedy, 2005; Schon, 1984). Through probing more deeply through field work and observations, researchers have accessed contextual factors that influence how teachers are able and willing to reach for and enact their visions.

One study that investigated the teacher vision and practice relationship focused on 13 pre-service elementary school teachers enrolled in a master's certification program with a reform-oriented program philosophy (McElhone et al., 2009). Drawing on Shulman and Shulman's framework (2004) and building on Hammerness' (2006) and others' work, the researchers looked into how visions of literacy teaching changed from the beginning of the pre-service teaching period to the end of the first year of teaching. The researchers also investigated the relationship between vision and the trajectory of change in practice and traced the relationship between contextual factors and practice-based changes. Data collection methods included interview questions about vision developed using Hammerness' (2006) vision statement protocol. To investigate the relationship to practice, videotaped literacy lessons were collected and scored using a rubric to assess practice indicators related to literacy and student learning. The data from vision statements were analyzed to identify patterns across the cohort for vision statements taken at the end of the pre-service year and compared to vision statements at the end of the first in-service year.

While teacher visions were highly personal and unique, as other researchers have found, themes across the cohort emerged. In general, teachers' visions grew more specific and concrete over time, including their ability to identify practical steps to be taken to achieve their visions. The findings also indicated differences between teachers related to

practice scores. Strong practice scores typically correlated with strong visions and with field placements that aligned with the reform-oriented program philosophy. Teachers with low practice scores' visions remained general and lacking concrete approaches to implementing literacy practices in the classroom.

While the researchers did not draw causal relationships between strength of vision and strength of practice, their findings suggest that different visions may result in differing trajectories of professional growth. One distinguishing strength of this study was the inclusion of videotaped lessons as a data source for investigating the vision-to-practice relationship. While teachers' voices are included, a limitation of this study is that the investigation of the relationship between teachers' visions and practice did not extend beyond the surface level to illustrate specific examples of teacher's actions in the classroom. Including teachers' perceptions of the role of their visions in their own development would have also strengthened the findings.

More recent studies of teacher vision have examined how teacher visions may fortify teachers against the turn toward prescriptive curriculum that has become more common under recent educational reform efforts. Aligned with Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2005) conception of curricular vision, Vaughn and Faircloth (2013) conducted a self-study examining in what ways having a strong instructional vision for literacy practices might influence teachers' sense of authority over instructional and curricular decision-making. Vaughn and Faircloth found that having a clear vision provided the teacher with a standpoint to advocate from her students' instructional needs. While teachers in Hammerness (2006) studies whose visions were not aligned with their school context often became disheartened at "trying to go against the grain," (Hammerness, 2006, p. 74),

this study suggests that strong visions may also empower teachers to become advocates for students (Vaughn & Faircloth, 2013).

A strength of the study is that Vaughn and Faircloth (2013) included interviews and observations of 13 first-grade students as a method for examining in what ways students' experiences in the classroom aligned with the teacher's literacy vision. The use of these methods suggested a bi-directional relationship between strength of teacher vision and students' perspectives on their learning. This was the only study located that examined this question. While strengths of the study included the triangulation of multiple data sources, there were also limitations. While the researchers draw conclusions that teacher vision may empower teachers to "speak back" to institutional directives, the study did not include instances that illustrate how the teacher took action to voice her resistance. Because Hammerness (2006) found that teachers' professional satisfaction was influenced by the relationship between broader school reform initiatives and individual teacher's personal visions, the researchers' assertions would have been strengthened through an examination of the teacher's professional satisfaction as well as a description of the actions that she took to sustain her vision in the face of administrative opposition to her teaching practices.

Zimmerman (2017) added to the research on teacher vision with his study that focused specifically on how four novice teachers responded to "knots in thinking" when confronted with oppositional pairs of intentions and how these dilemmas manifested themselves and influenced enactment. Zimmerman used Kennedy's (1999) framing of conflicting practical intentions in the classroom to investigate the alignment between teachers' instructional ideas and their actions. Using stimulated recall and Hammerness's

(2006) visioning protocol, Zimmerman focused on salient teaching moments in the classroom for teachers' perceptions, decision-making, and retrospective assessments of alignment between their ideals and actions. Zimmerman found that the teachers often perceived partial rather than perfect alignment of their instructional decisions with their visions and accepted this compromise as "good enough" solutions (p. 366). When teachers failed to identify decisions that did not align with their ideals, Zimmerman saw evidence that teachers were assimilating practices into their existing schema and accepted these decisions as a partial fit rather than seeing these decisions as a lack of alignment. Zimmerman viewed these moments as examples representing "knots in thinking." A strength of this study was the use of Kennedy's (2005) protocol for stimulated recall using video-recorded lessons which produced concrete examples of teachers' classroom decisions for their reflection.

This review of conceptual literature and empirical studies represents the body of scholarship on the role of teacher vision in teachers' learning and practice. While Hammerness (1999, 2004, 2006) studied vision as a broad construct and focused on how teachers' beliefs were aligned or not aligned with their current practice experiences, subsequent studies have focused on the application of vision as a learning tool and research method for examining teacher dispositions (Duffy, 2002; Vaughn & Faircloth, 2013), decision-making processes (Zimmerman, 2017), and literacy practices (Turner, 2007; McElhone et al., 2009; Vaughn & Faircloth, 2013). The practitioner-research approaches to using vision as both lens and method have informed the conceptual framework of this study. The studies of preservice teachers demonstrate that visions may

be enriched and extended as teachers develop as practitioners; yet, the question of how practicing teachers' visions are enriched and extended remains unexamined.

Supports and Barriers to the Enactment of New Practices

As teachers are the ultimate change agents, systemic change efforts depend on teachers' ownership and ability to take action to enact change within top-down initiatives. As has been discussed, in reform contexts, there is a persistent gap between reformers' visions and teachers' practices. The literature on school change efforts suggests that teachers pay close attention to reform initiatives but that their visions of reform are often ignored (Evans, 1996; Hammerness, 2006). With recent changes in educational policy through the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and the persistent need for improving writing instruction, we need to see from teachers' vantage points within their classrooms and schools what it is like to envision and engage in new practices to meet the challenging demands of 21st Century learning outcomes and what supports are needed to do it well. The following review provides a window into teachers' working lives and experiences as they navigate and negotiate supports and barriers. While this discussion of potential factors is not exhaustive, it offers a starting point for considering the role of contextual elements in the vision-to-practice process.

Personal Factors

Personal factors including beliefs, dispositions, knowledge, and experiences have been studied for how they influence teachers' enactment of new practices (Kennedy, 2005; Shulman, 1987; Spillane, 1999). Primarily, personal factors have been implicated in the enduring influence of teacher-centered practices over reform-oriented alternatives. Personal factors have been found to influence both *will*, defined as the motivation to

make changes, as well as *capacity*, or the ability to enact new practices (Spillane, 1999). Although personal factors may serve as personal resources to draw from for supporting reform actions (Spillane, 1999), much of the literature on personal factors suggests that they more often serve as barriers to teachers' implementations efforts, whether those reforms are externally or internally-driven.

Research on teachers' ideals and beliefs about teaching and learning suggest that teachers' beliefs about schooling are formed in childhood through their own educational experiences as students and are quite enduring (Kennedy, 1998; Lortie, 1975). They are also drawn from years of watching their own teachers' instruction for images of good teaching (Kennedy, 1998, 2005; Lortie, 1975). Teachers also draw on their own learning experiences from when they were students in order to imagine and design instructional models (Parsons & La Croix, 2013). This phenomenon, known as the *apprenticeship of observation* (Lortie, 1975), has been implicated in the longevity of "teacher-centered" practices whereby teachers default to the practices of their own former teachers rather than adopt practices they have studied in their teacher preparation programs (Kennedy, 1998). As teaching is recognized as exceedingly complex work, these tacit assumptions offer convenient and ready-made solutions for the multiple uncertainties encountered each day in the classroom. Teacher's long-held beliefs about teaching are considered a significant contributor to the stability of teaching over time in spite of successive reform efforts (Kennedy, 1998; Spillane, 1999).

In the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach (TELT) Study of the writing instruction of early career teachers, Kennedy (1998) and colleagues examined the relationship between teacher education and teacher learning to see whether teacher

education programs influenced novice teachers' interpretations and responses to common classroom scenarios. Major findings of the study concluded that teachers held beliefs about general issues in teaching and learning that were different from what they actually demonstrated in practice. Kennedy referred to this phenomenon as the contrast between *espoused ideals*, which refer to teachers' values about teaching and learning, and teachers' *immediate concerns*, which refer to the ideas that they evidence in their responses to situations that arise in the classroom. Kennedy did not use the term vision in her research; however, her focus on the relationship between teachers' espoused beliefs and their actual practices shares similarities with how other researchers have traced the vision-to-practice relationship.

By probing their lines of thinking about their actions, Kennedy (1998) was able to discern that when teachers were faced with practice-based situations, their ideals disappeared. When discussing their beliefs about the subject matter and importance of teaching writing, for example, teachers expressed values across four aspects of writing: prescriptive, conceptual, strategic, and purposeful aspects. However, Kennedy found that as the study moved closer to an analysis of writing practice, teachers became much more concerned with traditional prescriptive approaches to writing instruction, including teaching conventions, over reform-oriented alternatives. Teachers also demonstrated a teacher-centered need for authority over subject matter in their instructional choices. Kennedy (1998) concluded that enduring images of classroom control and authority over content contributed to the "strength and resilience of their concern about prescriptions" (p. 19).

The TELT study made a valuable contribution to the scholarship on how teachers learn to teach writing and the influences of specific teacher education program philosophy on teachers' ideals. While this study sheds light on how teachers' ideals may be abandoned when they are faced with classroom realities, Kennedy's (1998) findings are limited to an examination of the relationship between teachers' ideals about writing instruction and responses to practice-based scenarios. What we don't know from this study is how teachers' visions might be activated in the form of concrete examples of practice to be used for reflection, critique, and innovation in real classroom situations. For example, in the study, many teachers' espoused ideals of caring were in conflict with their immediate concerns for order and compliance. Kennedy drew the conclusion that teachers had abandoned their ideals of caring because they did not demonstrate an ethos of caring over an immediate concern for order. Teachers' visions and perspectives on what specific teaching practices could be evidence of caring were not examined. To deeply understand the factors that influence teachers' enactments of practice-based decisions, we need to know more about how teachers interpret and make-meaning of their own ideals in situated learning and teaching contexts.

Teacher educators have employed the method of *visioning* as one means for pre-service and early-career teachers to reflect, examine, and replace images of teaching that they have developed through their years as students. These vision descriptions have served as a useful tool for teachers to examine, expand, and revise previously held beliefs and ideas (Hammerness, 2006; McElhone et al., 2009; Turner, 2007). Images of teaching developed in childhood or rooted in deeply held beliefs are highly influential. However,

studies of visioning suggest that activating vision may challenge the influence of personal factors on the stability of traditional teaching practices (Hammerness, 2006).

Teacher Development Factors

Significantly for this study, teacher education, professional development, and professional learning factors have been found to have a complex influence on the enactment process. Kennedy's (1998) study revealed that teachers were able to alter their interpretations of situations through their participation in reform-oriented teacher education programs. Through close examination of predictors of teaching practice, Kennedy's findings demonstrated that the orientation of the teacher education program seemed to increase teacher-learners' concerns about students' writing strategies and purposes over prescriptive approaches; however, the influence was modest. To the contrary, teachers who received training from traditional programs held onto stronger beliefs about prescriptive practices. Studies also support that teacher education programs that focus on developing adaptive expertise have a significant influence on how teachers balance the many competing demands they face while attempting to enact new practices (Hammerness et al., 2005). Whether teachers have developed as innovators capable of examining and critiquing their own routines has also been identified as a factor in whether or not their enacted reforms reflect their ideals (Hammerness et al., 2005).

Strong professional learning partnerships may support teachers in the risk-taking and productive struggle required to engage in instructional innovations and sustained reform (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Westheimer, 2008; Whitcomb, 2004); however, developing a true professional community of learners is not an easy task (Grossman et al., 2001; Wenger, 1998). Social resources shared within these communities, including

collegial discussions or “teacher talk,” have been found to contribute to making tacit knowledge more visible and calling into question common assumptions about practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Teacher talk has also led to productive disequilibrium and comfort with ambiguity leading to productive learning and changed practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Grossman et al., 2001; Peercy et al., 2017; Spillane, 1999; Westheimer, 2008). Spillane (1999) found in his study of teachers engaged in discourse communities for reforming their core mathematics practices that practice-based discussions about the day-to-day meaning-making efforts to enact new practices contributed to teachers’ persistence and successes. Community support was also found to mediate other factors that presented as barriers. For example, ongoing teacher inquiry into practice helped teachers to mediate policy and practice factors through problem-solving and collaborative discourse about the daily tensions of implementing policy mandates. Peercy et al., (2017) also found that co-teacher debriefing about challenges implementing new CCSS-based English Language Arts curriculum with English Language Learners resulted in an “educative” struggle during interactions that afforded significant opportunities for learning (p. 213).

Inside School Factors

Classroom dynamics, curricular choices, and a range of student factors have also been studied for how they support or hinder the vision-to-practice relationship (McElhone et al., 2009; Vaughn, 2015). Teaching writing requires addressing competing demands, requiring teachers to balance process and content aspects with diverse student needs (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Kennedy, 1998). Inside classrooms, student learning serves as the primary factor supporting and motivating instructional change efforts

(Spillane, 1999). A repeating theme in the research on the enactment of new teaching practices is the *problem of enactment*, a phenomenon that occurs when teachers seemingly embrace a new idea yet struggle to apply it or continue enacting a previous practice out of habit (Kennedy, 1999; Lampert, 2010; Spillane, 1999; Zimmerman, 2017).

Teachers' perceptions of support within their school contexts, including school culture, collegiality, administrative support, and availability of resources have also been examined for their interactions with teachers' visions (Grossman et al., 2000; Hammerness, 1999, 2006; McElhone et al., 2009; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Squires & Bliss, 2004). Grossman et al. (2000) argue that school contexts are positioned to either "support or thwart continued learning and fuller appropriation of ideas and practices for teaching writing" which may occur slowly over time (p. 660). Schools and districts control curriculum materials and select professional development opportunities that influence whether or not teachers have access to the best tools and opportunities to continue developing new practices (Grossman et al., 2000). The perceived gap between teacher vision and school context may be highly influential as a support or barrier, experienced either as a motivator for new learning or abandonment of effort (Grossman et al., 2000; Hammerness, 1999, 2006; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Squires & Bliss, 2004). These studies reveal that the alignment across these factors is a significant source of teachers' professional agency, persistence, and feelings of success (Grossman et al., 2000; Hammerness, 2006; McElhone et al., 2009).

Using visions as a guide for taking action has been found to strength teachers' stances toward their own authority as knowers and may serve to empower them as decision-makers in their curricular content areas (Vaughn & Faircloth, 2013; Whitcomb,

2004) and as advocates for the learning needs of their students (Parsons & La Croix, 2013). Vaughn and Faircloth's (2013) findings indicated that having a strong instructional vision provided support for a teacher to resist prescriptive curriculum and pressure to "track" students for reading that conflicted with her vision for a holistic literacy approach in her classroom. Having a strong vision also has afforded teachers with the confidence and clarity of purpose to "push back against contextual influences" and to continue the work required to enact their own ideas for addressing reform-oriented changes (McElhone et al, 2009, p. 153). These findings further support Duffy's (2002) conception of vision as a standpoint from which to challenge or change contextual barriers.

Outside of School factors

From the standpoint of reformers, accountability pressure is a necessary support for teachers to enact reforms (Spillane, 1999; Valli et al., 2008). While policies offer teachers both incentives and opportunities to learn, teachers are often left to interpret these reform visions through multiple, competing, and vague messages presented across a variety of local, state, and federal policy documents (Spillane, 1999). Policy documents are often ambiguous and seldom implemented at the local level in the spirit of the reform (Spillane, 1999; Graham, Gillespie & McKeown, 2013). In particular, Graham et al., (2013) posit that the Common Core State Standards for writing are "mostly based on educated guesses" and that the goals and benchmarks lack precision, accuracy, and differentiation (p. 2). In spite of these poor signals, teachers pay serious attention to policies in making curricular and instructional decisions at all levels and are particularly influenced by state assessment systems (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Kennedy, 2005; Spillane, 1999; Valli et al., 2008). However, increased workload and pressure may leave

teachers with little time or mental energy to process new curriculum, reflect on their teaching, or critique their own implementation of the reform policies (Valli & Buese, 2007; Valli et al., 2008).

In high-stakes accountability climates, teachers also struggle to hold onto their visions. In their study of fourth- and fifth-grade teachers, Valli and Buese (2007) found that policy demands and directive curriculum left teachers struggling to implement new practices while simultaneously keeping up with a rigidly paced curriculum. Teachers' practices deteriorated to low level tasks and activities as a result. Teachers described their practices as "hit or miss" and "drive by" teaching (Valli & Buese, 2007, p. 545). The researchers also found that teachers' instructional decisions, including text selection, were driven by test preparation over ideals of making real-world connections or drawing on students' background knowledge and cultures. This has been found particularly true for below-grade level students. For this class of students, a test-centered approach led to a lack of personal connection between teacher and students and a lack of intellectual engagement with the class (Valli & Chambliss, 2007). The researchers faulted policy directives with "promot[ing] an environment in which teachers are asked to relate to the students differently, enact pedagogies that are often at odds with their vision of best practice, and experience high levels of stress" (Valli & Buese, 2007, p. 520).

Teacher vision may serve as a self-regulatory force guiding instructional decision-making in reform climates (Duffy, 2002; Vaughn, 2015). Teachers' zones of enactment may play an important role in the implementation of reform initiatives. Zones of enactment refer to "the space where reform initiatives are encountered by the world of practitioners and 'practice,' delineating that zone in which teachers notice, construe,

construct and operationalize their instructional ideas advocated by reformers” (Spillane, 1999, p. 144). Therefore, as there is an interest in better understanding the tensions teachers experience between their espoused ideals, their immediate concerns, and contextual factors, one of the aims of this study is to investigate how other concerns besides fidelity to their visions influence teachers’ actions and experiences as they enact new practices within reform-oriented contexts.

Conceptual Framework

In this section, I present a conceptual framework for this study (Figure 1). This conceptual framework illustrates assumptions about the individual teacher’s experience of the process of enacting their inquiry and how this vision-to-practice process is embedded within institutional and social learning contexts. The outer frame represents the institutional context including the countywide literacy reform initiative which is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Within this outer frame are two overlapping fields representing the professional development experience on the left and the local school context on the right. By positioning these contexts within the outer frame, the assumption is that teachers participate in writing instruction-based professional development not as a separate professional development experience but within the context of their knowledge of and participation in the systemic reform initiative and broader federal vision for reform represented in the Common Core State Standards. The overlapping of the professional development and school contexts suggests teachers’ intentions to make meaning of the professional development experience for changes to their teaching practice. Additionally, this overlap represents the dynamic relationship between these two contexts as a connected space where teachers construct and refine new

knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). The diamond in the left field represents the development of the writing instruction inquiry focus area. It is theorized that teachers' inquiries are influenced by new learning through their participation in the BWP professional learning program. Within this overlapping field in the middle of the diagram, teachers take action to move their inquiry into practice. This is also the space where teachers encounter barriers and supports to their enactment which influence their actions in the classroom. Finally, the diamond in the right field of the diagram represents the enacted practice under the influence of school and institutional factors.

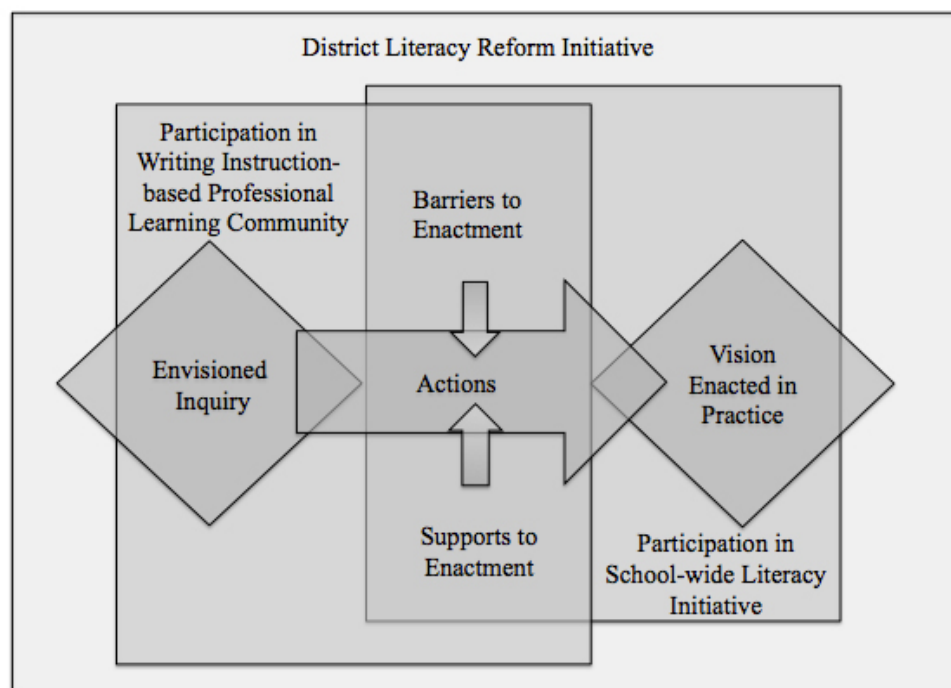


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Teachers' Vision-to-Practice Process

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed selected conceptual and empirical literature on vision in the teacher learning process and the ways that teachers' visions influence learning, growth in practice, and the development of a professional stance in reform contexts. I

have also taken a retrospective look at recent reform efforts and found a persistent gap between reformers' visions and teachers' practices. The literature has also revealed that teachers are often ignored in reform conversations while also blamed for reform failures in spite of the many barriers they face implementing reforms in their schools. Through the review of research literature on teacher vision, I examined the utility of using the construct of vision as a method for surfacing teachers' ideals, examining teachers' deeply held beliefs about literacy, and influencing enactments of new literacy practices in the classroom. Even though there is a renewed attention and a persistent need to improve literacy instruction, and writing instruction in particular, studies that used the concept of vision as a lens for examining inquiry and reform in the area of writing were found to be lacking. Finally, I presented a conceptual framework for examining the complex process teachers follow as they navigate contextual factors that surround their visions and how these factors influence the enactments they attempt in their classrooms. This framework provides the grounding for the study that follows.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This research study investigated practicing teachers' visions for inquiry into their writing instruction and the process of enacting those visions in their classrooms with a focused look at the contextual factors that either supported or presented barriers to their efforts. In this chapter, I describe my rationale for the methodological choices, research stance, research context, data collection and data analysis procedures for the study.

Research Questions

As has been traced in Chapter 2, this study builds on the existing literature on the role of inexperienced teachers' visions in professional contexts and the role of a variety of factors that provide support and barriers to teachers' implementation of their visions. This study is different in that it focused specifically on a close examination of how practicing teachers envision and enact an inquiry into their teaching practice.

The questions that guided this inquiry were:

1. How do teachers participating in a professional learning community focused on writing instruction envision an inquiry for improving writing in their teaching practice?
2. How do teachers enact their vision into their practice of teaching writing?
3. What are the main supports and barriers teachers experience during the process of enacting their vision for teaching writing?

Research Context

This study was situated within a professional development program of a university-based local site of The National Writing Project, the Beechwood Writing

Project¹ (BWP), for which I had served as a co-director for three years. Beechwood University is a large, public research institution serving 41,000 students. The BWP was started approximately ten years ago to serve three diverse school districts within the university's professional development school (PDS) network. These counties represent a cross-section of urban, suburban and rural school settings. The counties where the PDS schools are located are diverse economically and demographically. Although the BWP has attracted participants from all three of neighboring counties in the past, at the present time, the site has attracted mostly teachers from the Maple Grove Public School System (MGPSS), a high needs Local Education Agency (LEA) that provides the district-level context of the study. As a result, the BWP has focused its efforts on securing grant funding, developing outreach, formalizing relationships with community groups, and designing programming to address the specific professional learning needs of the teachers in this LEA which is in the midst of a systemic reform initiative aimed at increasing the rigor of literacy instruction.

Maple Grove Public School System

MGPSS is one of the largest school districts in the United States. It serves over 120,000 students in over 200 schools. The student population includes approximately 60% African-American students, 30% Hispanic/Latino students, 5% Caucasian students, and 3% Asian students. In addition, over 60% of the students receive Free or Reduced meals, and a growing number, currently over 15% of students, are classified as English Language Learners. Recently released data from a national assessment of Common Core

¹ The name of the local Writing Project, institution, and school district have been changed.

State Standards revealed that students in MGPSS continue to score below the state average. The results also pointed to substantial achievement gaps between Black and White students and Latino and White students.

Through implementation of several important reforms, including a greater and broader focus on literacy, and not simply reading, MGPSS continues to work towards enhancing literacy instruction and achievement for all students. In their recent five-year master plan, MGPSS acknowledged persistent achievement gaps and expressed commitment to accelerate the closure of achievement gaps across student groups with a systemic focus on literacy, differentiated instruction, and targeted resources. Included in the plan were specific literacy initiatives focused on writing: (a) writing in response to reading across all content areas to promote reading comprehension, (b) implementation of writing process/ writing purposes across content disciplines, (c) a targeted focus on papers of analysis and research skills and processes and (d) building students' digital literacy, among other reform initiatives (MGPSS district document, 2015, p. 6).

Beechwood Writing Project Professional Learning Program

Guided by the National Writing Project's (NWP) mission to focus "the knowledge, expertise, and leadership of our nation's educators on sustained efforts to improve writing and learning for all learners" across all disciplines, the Beechwood Writing Project leadership team designed a program for teachers in the MGPSS with a focus on the District's literacy initiative goals ("About NWP - National Writing Project," n.d.). See Appendix B for more information about the National Writing Project's mission. The BWP program had two overarching goals for the teacher participants:

- to increase their knowledge and application of appropriate instructional techniques in writing for students of diverse learning needs,
- to develop teachers' capacity to become leaders in their teaching communities and to take a teacher leadership role in disciplinary literacy within the larger school setting.

A six-graduate credit program was designed as a sustained year-long professional learning experience. The program consisted of three courses: 1) a Summer Institute (SI) focused on writing process approaches; 2) a fall semester course, Fostering Effective Writing Instruction focused on teacher inquiry practices and creating a classroom community of writers and 3) a spring semester course, Seminar in Teacher Leadership, which focused on professional development workshop design and delivery. As MGPSS had identified the desire for sustained contact with teachers, the program also included twenty hours of personalized coaching within small groups facilitated by leadership team members across the school year.

The BWP leadership team's shared vision of the program was that through adopting an inquiry mindset within a collaborative professional community, teachers would find purpose and activate support and resources to develop their own knowledge for practice within and for their own classrooms. Through their involvement in this professional community and through developing their own professional development workshop to share with a school audience, my vision was that these teachers would be empowered to act as agents of their own professional growth. Like planting seeds, their inquiry and learning would lead to more authentic questions, practices, and approaches that would be pollinated in their classrooms and cross-pollinated with other teachers in

their schools and within the cohort spreading new practices and values for writing, like new seeds, outward to other colleagues in their schools and beyond.

Researcher Stance

Within the interpretivist tradition, the researcher is the primary instrument of the data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009). As such, all of my observations were by necessity filtered through my perspective and worldview (Merriam, 2009). Accordingly, my experiences, biases, and assumptions informed my position in the research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In order to be mindful of my positionality, I offer the following background information that informed my position and how I worked to be reflective and conscious of my personal biases throughout the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Prior to the start of the study, I had first-hand knowledge of the participants through our involvement in the BWP Program. At the beginning of the Summer Institute, I clarified my status as a doctoral student and communicated to the teachers that I would be implementing a study related to the BWP for my doctoral work. In keeping with the mission of the NWP and BWP, I situated myself within the cohort as a co-learner and fellow teacher as well as member of the leadership team. I took field notes and engaged in activities as a teacher-learner throughout. I assumed many of the responsibilities of helping with logistics rather than instruction during the three courses. During the Summer Institute, fall, and spring course work, I also served in a coaching role, facilitating a small group of teachers through the stages of developing their inquiry focus during monthly meetings. To avoid blurring my role of researcher and instructor, I was not the primary instructor or teacher of record for any of the three courses, and I maintained a position of co-learner within the cohort as much as possible. The study also did not begin until after

the course work had been completed in March. Overall, I worked to create open communication and transparency and to develop collegial relationships and trust with all of the teachers throughout the program that would support an ethical researcher-participant relationship.

As a veteran public school teacher myself, I also brought insider knowledge of the experience of being a public school teacher to the study that informed my stance. While I believe this understanding enhanced my awareness to the subtleties of teachers' actions in the classroom and the myriad factors that may influence teachers' efforts to make practice-based changes in their classrooms, I also recognize that I have certain biases about teachers' roles that might shape the way that I interpreted what I observed in teachers' classrooms. I believe that teachers face many conflicting demands and that they are often faced with challenging situations in the classroom with no easy solutions. It was not my intention to judge or evaluate whether or not teachers should or should not make the decisions that they did in their classrooms; however, I recognized that my own assumptions particularly through my experiences within the work of the National Writing Project might shaped the manner in which I understood what I observed in teachers' classroom. In an effort to bracket my own assumptions, I focused on trying to understand teachers' experience from their own perspectives and wrote self-reflexive memos to address this limitation (Merriam, 2009).

While I recognized that I brought insider understandings of the participants and the general circumstances and conditions of being a teacher, I also recognized that there were areas where I am less informed. I am an outsider in the county within which this study is situated and had limited knowledge of the specific schools where these teachers

taught. I did not presume to already know or understand how teachers had envisioned their inquiry for their specific classrooms and students or the specific contextual factors that these teachers experienced in their daily work. I endeavored to ask questions in such a way as to present teachers as the experts of their own experiences. It was my hope that the rapport that I had already established with these teachers would provide a comfort level that would allow me access to their classrooms in the role of an unobtrusive observer and that the teachers would be comfortable with my presence and regard me as a credible listener. Given that the act of observation may bring about changes in participants, I made it a practice to ask teachers where they wanted me to sit and how they wanted to explain my presence to their students. Each teacher had a differing expectation for my level of participation within the classroom, and I followed their signals so as to be responsive to the role that they felt was most comfortable for them.

Through recognizing the biases and assumptions that I brought to this work, I continuously examined my own positionality for influences on my interpretations and understandings, assumptions and biases through voice memos. I was concerned during a few instances that teachers were engaged in sharing with me in ways that they later described as “therapeutic” and that this may have been a reflection of their blurring the lines between my roles as a “mentor” and researcher (Merriam, 2009). I endeavored to maintain an ethical position in these instances, maintaining confidentiality, while returning to the purpose of the interview with sensitivity as “first and foremost to gather data” (Patton, 2002, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 231). As a novice researcher, I discussed these incidents with my committee members for strategies as the research commenced.

Case Study Approach

This dissertation uses embedded multi-case study design to explore three teacher cases. A case study design allows for the in-depth understanding of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). Case study is useful for understanding complex phenomena occurring in a bounded context, including a group or a program and its related phenomena (Merriam, 2009). Describing teachers' vision-to-practice experiences within the context of a professional learning community is a complex phenomenon occurring in a bounded context; therefore, case study is an appropriate choice for this study. In particular, an interpretive case study design may be used to illustrate, support, or challenge current theory that does not seem to adequately address the phenomenon. The lack of research and theory on practicing teachers' enactments of their own visions warrants an interpretive approach. Rather than simply describing the context and phenomenon, in an interpretive case study, the researcher is interested in conceptualization and/or categorization of variables in order to construct theory (Merriam, 2009). In this manner, case study is used to bring "interpretation in context," as the researcher focuses on the interaction of the factors that make up the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). This approach supports my interest in taking a focused look at teachers' visions and the actions and factors that influence how those visions are developed and enacted in practice.

A defining characteristic in case study research and that sets it apart from other approaches is the necessity of defining the case as an intrinsically bounded and integrated system (Merriam, 2009; Stake 1995). Applying these criteria, there are clear boundaries to this study. The BWP teacher fellow cohort during the 2017-2018 program of study

made up a bounded system, and the 2017-2018 program cycle, which corresponded with the school year, provided an ending point for the case study. Additionally, a key factor differentiating an embedded case study design is the nested nature of the context in which the phenomenon takes place. Each teacher who participated in the professional development program and who implemented an inquiry focus in their classroom represented a unique and individual unit of analysis of the phenomenon. Each of these teacher's experiences represented an individual case nested, or embedded, within the greater context of the professional development program cohort. Case study methods allowed for an in-depth investigation of each individual teacher's experience while also creating opportunities for cross-case analysis and comparison.

There were specific advantages to using case study methods and a multi-case study design. A central tendency of case study research is to illuminate a decision or set of decisions including why the decisions were made, how the decisions were implemented, and to trace the outcomes of the implementation (Yin, 2104). Because the specific focus of this research was understanding teachers' experiences as they implemented their inquiry and their perceptions of the outcomes of that implementation, a case study design was a useful approach for tracing this complex process. Additionally, case study allows for issues which are "intricately wired to political, social, historical, and especially personal contexts" to emerge and to be treated with importance to the case (Stake, 1995). As teachers in this study were sharing potentially personal factors about challenges they faced during a time of mounting pressure to improve student writing performance, issues that were brought forward became important organizing elements for understanding the phenomenon. Case study also offers flexibility to the researcher in

modifying the research questions during the research process as new issues emerge (Stake, 1995). As the study progressed, it became clear that teachers' did not see their own inquiry focused work as an element of "reform" and because of this, the research questions were amended to refer to their work as "inquiry" instead of "reform" which was the language that I had used during the professional development experience to describe their self-selected area of focus for improving writing in their classroom. The research questions changed to respond to this issue.

Finally, the case study design allows for the researcher to be positioned with participants as co-creators and generators of knowledge (Stake, 1995). This is particularly relevant to this study as the teacher participants were "interactively linked" with the researcher as members of a professional learning community (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The case study approach allowed for a more natural integration of the research process into the ongoing work of the community which has a stated mission of supporting individual and collective inquiry for improved teaching practice. As such, the case study research design enhanced and aligned with the professional learning community's philosophy and goals.

Participants and Selection Process

Twenty teachers from within the BWP site network of school districts were selected to participate in the yearlong professional learning program. The 20 teachers in the 2017-2018 cohort were intentionally diverse representing a variety of teaching positions across elementary, middle, and high school levels and schools and varied in terms of teaching experience and discipline. All were practicing teachers with at least three years of experience.

In order to narrow the scope of the study to take an in-depth look at teachers' practices, I limited the number of participants to three teachers selected from the 20 teachers in the cohort using a purposeful sampling strategy. Because contextual factors were highly relevant to the phenomenon of study, the following factors excluded teachers from consideration for the study: a lack of successful participation in the full professional development experience, perceived lack of professional freedom to enact their inquiry focus in their classroom (e.g., their principal had directed them to teach writing in a particular way that did not allow for their writing inquiry work), or a teaching assignment that did not require the teaching of writing on a regular basis as a classroom teacher. Because the focus of this study was how teachers were assuming new roles and taking on new practices as related to the MGPSS Initiative, elementary school teachers who are already expected to assume primary responsibilities for teaching writing were excluded from consideration in order to focus on the unique experiences of secondary teachers who are tasked with balancing content and skill development. A screening survey was used to determine which teachers met the eligibility criteria. From the group of teachers meeting these factors, a purposeful sampling strategy was used to select three diverse cases. Three teacher participants were selected based on the following criteria:

- Variation of secondary school level (middle school, high school). Given that the purpose of the study was to understand the experience of practicing teachers as they enacted their inquiry within a systemic literacy initiative, it was important to select participants from different teaching levels. Secondary teachers across levels were participating in the countywide literacy initiative and positioned as agents of change for improving writing instruction and student performance in the area of

writing, therefore, having diverse cases across teaching level would potentially lead to the uncovering of “important shared patterns” within their experiences of envisioning and implementing their inquiry in their classrooms (Merriam 1998, p. 63).

- Representativeness of teaching assignment. The assumption is that a representative sample of teachers from different teaching assignments (i.e., Reading English Language Arts teachers and teachers with other content area expertise) would provide rich data that may be analyzed across cases for a better understanding of the process of enacting their inquiry. The assumption was that teachers with background and training in the English Language Arts may have similar approaches for improving their writing instruction; therefore, in order to have a better understanding of a fuller range of teacher experiences, it was important to include teachers who were teaching writing in other content areas. An assumption was that English Language Arts teachers and content area teachers would potentially have different as well as shared barriers and supports to their enactment of their inquiries.

I invited all teachers in the cohort to complete the screening survey at the final class meeting in March of 2018. Using the survey data, I narrowed the participant list based on the criteria represented above. As I reviewed responses, I also sought a point of commonality among potential participants with the thought that this would provide opportunities for comparison and contrast across cases (Yin, 2014). Grade level differences in secondary teachers extended from 6-12 within this group; however, there was a concentration of five potential participants teaching eighth or ninth grade which

corresponded with the divide between secondary levels. I contacted the five potential participants by email to invite them to participate in the study. Of the five teachers contacted, three teachers responded that they were available and willing to participate. These three teachers represented differences across teaching level, course assignment, school, and content area but shared the commonality of teaching either eighth or ninth grade. Table 1 below presents general information about each teacher participant. This sampling strategy ensured that each teacher represented an information-rich individual case for in-depth study within a multi-case design, providing points for both comparison and contrast across cases (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014).

Table 1

Case Study Participants

Participant	Race	Level	Grade Level	Course	School	Years of Teaching Experience
Justin Fordham ²	White	High School	9	U.S. History II, Honors, On-Grade level	Silver Maple High School	16 years
Bria Buckley	African-American	Middle School	8	U.S. History I Honors, On-Grade level	Dogwood Creek Middle School	7 years
Marie Martin	African-American	Middle School	8/ 6	Reading English Language Arts, On-Grade level	Birch Ridge Middle School	21 years

² All participants' names and school names have been changed.

Each of these participants came to the BWP Program with similar interests in improving their own role in implementing writing instruction in their classrooms. They came to the program with recommendations from their principals supporting them as candidates and were active and engaged members of the cohort. Fuller descriptions of their background, teaching experience, and teaching context are presented as portraits in each of their individual case chapters.

Methods of Data Sources and Data Collection

Although case study is not limited to any particular methods of data collection, good case study research draws upon multiple sources of data (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Data sources for this study included document analysis, in-depth interviews, a group interview, observation, and field notes. These data sources provided multiple means for developing a robust understanding of the teachers' experiences, actions, and perspectives on their visions and the process of enacting their vision into their teaching practice including information about how teachers were able to implement their visions as observed in their own classrooms. Data collection took place between March 2018 and June 2018. Table 2 includes research questions and corresponding data sources.

Table 2

Research Questions and Corresponding Data Sources

Research Questions	Data Sources
1. How do teachers participating in a professional learning community focused on writing instruction envision an inquiry for improving writing in their teaching practice?	BWP Course Documents Screening Survey Interview 1 Pre-observation Interviews Post-observation Interviews Closing Interview
2. How do teachers enact their vision into their practice of teaching writing?	BWP Course Documents Interview 1 Pre-observation Interviews

	Observations Post-observation Interviews Closing Interview Group Interview
3. What are the main supports and barriers teachers experience during the process of enacting their vision for teaching writing?	Interview 1 Pre-observation Interviews Observations Post-observation Interviews Closing Interview Group Interview

Table 3 provides a list of data collection events which are discussed in detail below. All research instruments are included in Appendix C.

Table 3

Data Collection Events

Data Source	Mr. Fordham	Ms. Buckley	Ms. Martin	Total
Screening Survey	1	1	1	3
Initial Interview	1	1	1	3
Pre-observation Interviews	3	4	4	11
Classroom Observations	4	6	4	14
Post-observation Interviews	3	4	4	11
Final Individual Interview	1	1	1	3
Group Interview	1	1	1	1
BWP Course Documents	7	7	7	21

Screening Survey

I used a screening survey to screen the twenty teachers in the cohort to select the three embedded focal participants for this study. According to Stake (1995), surveys are often used in case study research as a method of selecting individuals for case study. The screening survey questions addressed inclusionary and exclusionary criteria and were used to gather relevant background information and informed the selection of participants for this study. As several interview questions required participants to consider their plans

or expectations for the upcoming semester of their teaching, responses from the survey were used for follow-up questions during subsequent interviews. While surveys are not a substitute for more in-depth methods of data collection, the participant's survey responses served as an efficient and useful supplemental source of data for providing brief background information that aided in beginning the case study interviews and informed the development of further questions during the study.

Personal Document Analysis

I collected materials the focal teachers produced for their teacher inquiry focus during the BWP professional development courses as useful snapshots of teacher's personal perspectives and most importantly reflective of their own process of using writing as a "unique mode of learning" (Emig, 1977, p. 122). These documents included: (a) goal statements for the professional development program, (b) personal writing and a reflection on that writing, (c) a proposal of a practice-based inquiry into their teaching practice with research questions and rationale, (d) refinement of inquiry questions and a plan for implementation, (e) a plan for analysis of their inquiry progress, and (e) professional development workshop documents for sharing their inquiry work with colleagues (See Appendix D for a description of these course documents). These personal document analyses served as a snapshot in time of individual teacher's perspectives. Personal documents are "any first-person narratives that describe an individual's actions, experiences, and beliefs" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 133). According to Merriam (2009), documents are valuable in providing a focused look into the writer's personal perspective. Although highly subjective, personal documents are considered "a reliable source of data concerning a person's attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world" though

they may not be reliable representations of what actually occurred (p. 143). These documents were especially useful for stimulated recall of teachers' visions, beliefs and attitudes at earlier points in the year. These documents were analyzed for data about each teacher's vision and motivation for coming to the BWP Program and used to prompt teachers to reflect back on their process of implementing their inquiry across the school year, which generated in-depth revelations of personal beliefs and views.

Teachers' Lesson Plans and Class Documents

I collected lesson plans, activities, rubrics, and resources focal teachers used during each of the lessons that I observed for insights into how teachers were enacting their inquiry through their development and implementation of tools for student learning. These documents primarily offered a "stable" reference point for the discussion of teachers' intentions related to their actions during pre-observation and post-observation interviews (Merriam, 2009).

Interviews

I conducted multiple interviews with each focal teacher during the study which were audio-recorded and transcribed (See Table 3 for interview details). Interviews are considered one of the most valuable methods of case study research (Yin, 2014). Significantly for this study, in-depth interviews allowed for the uncovering of perceptions and understandings that are typically hidden from view (Gubrium, 2012). Teacher visions were highly personal, subjective, complex, and internally understood. As such, in-depth interviews served as a critical method for me to inquire into this unobservable phenomenon. Through interview techniques, participants described their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and processes (Gubrium, 2012). In-depth interviews allowed me to

learn more about how participants interpreted and understood their own visions and their vision-to-practice process. Through engaging in multiple interviews, this method allowed me to develop insights over time into how participants understood “some piece of the world” through their own perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 103).

Interviews also allowed me to understand individual teachers’ perspectives retrospectively as they reflected on their own progress toward enacting their inquiry. In particular, interviews provided a method for teachers to describe factors that may not have been visible to the researcher during fieldwork as well as provided a method for revealing their *lines of thinking* as they described the instructional decisions they made during post-observation interviews (Kennedy, 2005). Because interviews served as such a significant source of data collection for all three research questions and because the interview questions should be real questions for discussion rather than attempts at simply operationalizing the research questions, I piloted interview questions with three teacher colleagues before using them with participants and refined them in order to better focus on the phenomenon (Maxwell, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews. With semi-structured interviews, a researcher is able to ensure comparable data across cases; however, by controlling the manner in which topics are discussed during the interview, the researcher loses the opportunity to understand how the participants might approach the topic on their own (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). To address this limitation, different types of interview strategies were employed at different points in the research. Because semi-structured interviews served as a primary method for capturing participants’ in-depth descriptions of their own visions and explanations of their teaching decisions from their own perspectives, I provided

unstructured opportunities for teachers to approach topics in their own ways during post-observation interviews and during the group interview.

During the Initial Interview, I focused on in-depth descriptions of teachers' visions, how their inquiry had been enacted in practice during the first semester of the school year and discussed personal factors that had shaped their approach to writing instruction. These interviews, as was the case with many of the interviews conducted, exceeded the expected time. Some of the initial interview questions regarding teachers' motivation for joining the BWP and what led to their specific inquiry focus were saved for the second interview.

Pre-observation and post-observations interviews were conducted before and after each classroom observation to further explore how teachers conceptualized their visions for practice; however, the focus of these interviews was specifically on *theory-in-use* as teachers described their specific intentions for implementing their inquiry into their practice in their classrooms. During pre-observation interviews, the participants and I reviewed their teaching materials, including lesson plans and activities and they described how their plans were informed by their inquiry and how their intentions differed or were similar to how they had approached the lesson in the past. We also established a common framework for post-observation interviews about anything they wanted me to look for or to be mindful of during observations. These interviews were scheduled to immediately precede observations within 1-2 days and were occasionally conducted in the morning before school immediately before the observation.

The post-observation interviews were generated from particular events that teachers identified or that I identified during the fieldwork observations for points of

clarification and discussion regarding how implementation of the lesson aligned or did not align with teachers' stated intentions during pre-observation interviews. Selecting specific events for discussion during the interview was a way to avoid broad rationales and provided a means of staying focused on the specifics of teaching practice (Kennedy, 2005). These interviews often lasted longer than intended due to the semi-structured nature of the interview as unstructured opportunities gave way to discussion of other issues of concern that teachers surfaced including tensions between their visions and their school context as well as extended anecdotes about students and balancing demands of teaching. The final interview, which coincided with the last weeks of the school year, served as an opportunity for reflection on the year and member-checks on preliminary themes derived during data analysis for input and clarification. During this interview, I shared documents created during the BWP Program, including personal writing and teachers' research plans for their reflections. This interview was also focused on exploring teachers' own experiences as writers and students of writing. While transcribing and analyzing data between interviews, I occasionally had questions for teachers about factual information, and emailed with quick clarification questions. I added their emailed responses to the data set.

Group interview. In addition to individual interviews, I conducted one group interview with the three focal teachers on the last day of school at the offices of the Beechwood Writing Project. Because participants were known to each other because of their yearlong participation in the professional development cohort, they shared experiences and a familiarity that provided context and a comfort level for relating to each other in the group interview setting (Gubrium, 2012, p. 168). A group interview is a

unique method in that participants are engaged in the co-construction of meaning (Gubrium, 2012). The group interview moved from more structured to less structured questions during the process allowing for participants to assume more control of the agenda. A group interview provided a context for participants to engage in “sharing and comparing” of their experiences implementing their inquiry into their practice. (Gubrium, 2012, p. 164). It also provided an occasion for the teachers to make “substantive links” between their perspectives and others’ as well as to expand on material that had been presented earlier (Gubrium, 2012, p. 166-167). This interview focused on the concepts in the theoretical framework that guided the development of the study and served as another opportunity for member checks as teachers were engaged in discussing theoretical concepts such as the role of vision in teacher learning and whether or not there had been barriers and supports they had encountered in their enactment process. One limitation of this method was that participants occasionally talked over each other and changed the focus of the discussion. In an attempt to address this, I served as a moderator and brought back earlier points for follow-up as the interview progressed.

Observations and Field Work

Observations of teacher’s lessons occurred at four to six points between March and June. Observations were audio-recorded and transcribed. An observation protocol was used to capture points in the lesson for discussion during the post-observation (See Appendix C). This observation protocol captured both descriptive and reflective field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Descriptive field notes included descriptions of activities during the lesson. Reflective field notes included speculations, thoughts, and questions that occurred during the lesson for further discussion during post-observation interviews.

These points included: (a) why the teacher portrayed subject matter in a particular way; (b) why the teacher asked a certain question; (c) why the teacher gave a particular direction; (d) why the teacher deviated from the lesson plan; (e) Why the teacher responded to a student in a particular way; or (f) why the teacher decided to transition from one activity to the next, among others. Teachers were also asked to identify points in the lesson that they wanted to discuss during the post-observation interview. These points served as touchstones for exploring teacher's *lines of thinking* (Kennedy, 2005) and for discussing the alignment of teacher's visions with their enactment of instruction in their classrooms.

According to Maxwell (2012), while interviewing serves as a valid means for understanding perspectives, observation enables the researcher to draw inferences about those perspectives that could not be learned through interviews alone. Significantly for this study, field work and observations in teachers' classrooms provided insight into teachers' tacit understandings and "theory-in-use" as well as beliefs that they may not have shared in an interview situation (Maxwell, 2012).

Through the use of case study methods and these multiple sources of data, I collected a rich set of data of each embedded case. These multiple opportunities provided the means for uncovering the interaction of factors that made up the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009) and to compare findings across multiple data sources and cases (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Human Subjects Protection

Throughout the data collection process, I took steps to protect the human subjects in this study in accordance with Internal Review Board (IRB) and the District's Office of

Research guidelines (See Appendix E for IRB approval). Teacher participants were sent a copy of the approved consent form before the Initial Interview to review and ask any questions prior to being asked to consent to the study (See Appendix F for the approved participant content form). All participants signed a consent form during after meeting to answer their questions prior to the first interview. I reminded participants of their rights to not answer a question or that they had a right to withdraw from the study prior to interviews. I protected the privacy and confidentiality of participants by not sharing any of their information. All data collected for each participant was anonymized and securely stored on the researchers' password-protected computer in a password-protected Dropbox folder.

Data Storage

I developed a case study database to organize and document the date, purpose, length, and brief descriptions of all interviews conducted during the study. I maintained and organized digital folders as a case database for each participant which included separate folders organized chronologically for each interview and observation along with any digital copies of documents related to that interview. Before storing, I redacted any identifying information from documents. I scanned hardcopies of documents as PDFs and placed them in the case folders which were stored within a password protected Dropbox folder on a password protected computer. I kept original hardcopies of transcripts and documents in three-ring binders for each case study participant which was stored in a locked file cabinet. I audio-recorded each interview using the Voice Memos application on my iPhone. I transferred audio-recordings of interviews from my phone to my computer, removed them from my phone and then stored them in a password-protected

folder. Audio-recorded transcripts were stored in a separate password-protected file on my computer.

Data Analysis

During this study, I analyzed data in a continuous and iterative manner as the study progressed (Creswell, 2009). As I began the study, I made time for organizing the data for analysis, listening to audio recordings, reviewing transcriptions, reading over material to gain a general sense of the information while reflecting on the overall meaning of the information (Creswell, 2009). Immediately after each interview and classroom observation, I recorded voice-to-text memos of my impressions and questions. Between observations and post-observations, I had interviews transcribed using a secure online service Temi.com which utilizes speech-to-text processes, and then I cleaned each draft transcript and edited these documents to ensure that transcriptions were verbatim. I typed any field notes taken during interviews and observations and added impressions and comments. These notes served as preliminary “jottings” that informed initial ideas for analysis and questions for further consideration (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

To inform my qualitative coding process, I relied on Merriam’s (2009) *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* and Miles, Huberman & Saldana’s (2014) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. I used a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to organize and manage my data sources and to engage in my qualitative coding process. I selected Dedoose because of its easy user interface. Before using Dedoose, I printed out Initial Interviews for all three participants and engaged in open coding making notations next to potentially relevant pieces of data in an effort to have a “conversation with the data” (Merriam, 2009).

For the first research question which focused on describing teachers' visions for their inquiry focus on teaching writing, I used *a priori* deductive codes along dimensions of professional practice including *teacher roles*, *student roles*, *the role of the curriculum*, and the *relationship between the classroom and 21st Century* taken from Hammerness' (2006) visioning protocol. I then used open coding to develop additional codes which included teachers' visions for *professional growth*. During a second round of coding, I coded inductively for teacher vision using participants' own words and phrases to identify additional themes and meanings. In particular, teachers in this study used metaphors as a way of "making sense of their experience" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Teacher's metaphors helped me to refine and clarify codes and look for patterns within cases.

For my second research question, *How do teachers enact their vision into their practice of teaching writing?* I coded pre-observation, observation, and post-observation interviews. During first-cycle coding, I referred back to field notes, memos, and jottings for categories. I coded pre-observation interviews for teacher's *intentions*. I coded observations for teachers' *actions*, and post-observation interviews for teachers' *perceived outcomes* in order to trace their inquiry focus as it appeared in the data. Through open coding, I developed sub-codes related to teachers' practices based on observable and conceptual actions which included codes such as "using rubrics" and "giving verbal feedback" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). I then re-clustered categories that related to each other to reduce the total list of categories.

Research question three involved coding all of the data sources for *barriers* and *supports* to teachers' enactments. Once units of data had been identified, I generated sub-

codes pertaining to each of the categories of *supports* and *barriers*. I categorized these under subheadings of *personal factors*, *teacher professional development factors*, *inside school factors*, and *outside school factors* which were drawn from the literature. Through further inductive coding, additional categories emerged such as *technology* which cut across categories of barriers and supports. As the research question was to identify the main *barriers* and *supports* that influenced teachers' enactments of their vision, the extent to which these sub-categories were present across cases determined whether or not they were included in the findings.

Voice memos and follow-up written memos focused on emerging themes. Writing the cases proved a significant method for analysis and synthesis not just as a method for reporting (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Through writing, I engaged in more theory-building guided by the question "What were the lessons learned?" (Creswell, 2009). The results of that process are in-depth descriptions of the three focal teachers' vision, practices, supports, and barriers.

In cross-case analysis, my approach was to deepen "understanding and explanation" across themes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). I adopted a case-oriented strategy whereby I completed analysis of each case first to learn as much as possible about the contextual variables pertinent to each case (Merriam, 2009). The cross-case analysis involved building "abstractions across cases" in order to arrive at a general explanation that fit the individual cases (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). During cross case analysis, I coded each case for teacher vision using Hammerness' codes *a priori* for vision constellations across the dimensions of *focus* of the vision which refers to the specific subject or area of interest, *range* of the vision which refers to how broad or

narrowly focused is the vision (e.g., an individual classroom versus the community), and *distance* which refers to how close or how far the vision is from what a teacher is already doing in her current practice. Comparisons of the constellation clusters from this analysis were then used to generate typologies of teacher vision. These comparisons then led to memos and the forming of thematic conclusions.

Throughout the process, I worked through my interpretation by comparing findings with the literature and extant theories of teacher vision and enactment, sharing developing themes with critical friends and members of my committee for their input and questions, and engaging in member-checking at two points during the study. At the final interviews and group interviews, I presented themes and asked my participants, “Does this ring true?” (Merriam, 2009). Throughout this process, I continuously reflected on my assumptions and remained open to themes and patterns that emerged as I reviewed the data repeatedly.

Qualitative Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, validity refers to determining whether the findings of the study are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2009). In order to evaluate the validity of this study, I drew upon several strategies. To ensure reliability and internal validity, I carefully reported the methodology used to gather data and used a standard process. I created a case study database to organize and track data sources. I worked for trustworthiness through including multiple sources of data and capturing the perspectives of participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In order to enhance the accuracy of the account, I engaged in debriefing with critical friends for their questions and input (Creswell, 2009). To address interpretive validity, emerging themes

were shared with teacher participants for member-checking during the final interview and during the group interview for resonance and for their input and refinement. Member checks are an important means of addressing the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants have said or actions that they have taken and provides an opportunity to confirm perspectives (Maxwell, 2012). I also utilized a researcher journal to document the actions, decisions, and reflections made throughout the research process and to examine my biases and assumptions. This afforded opportunities for me to critically reflect on my positionality and subjectivity and to adjust my interpretations as needed in the interest of portraying the data accurately.

To address externally validity, I purposefully selected participants representing variation. I triangulated multiple data sources by examining evidence across sources and using that evidence to develop a justification of themes (Creswell, 2009). These data sources were coded and compared for interpretive accuracy through the data analysis process (Creswell, 2009). This helped me to develop thick, rich description to convey the findings, including quotations and stories of the participants told in their own words (Creswell, 2009). These descriptions are essential to case study knowledge which “resonates with our own experience because it is more vivid, concrete, and sensory” as well as more contextual (Merriam, 2009, p. 44).

CHAPTER 4: THE CASE OF MR. JUSTIN FORDHAM

In this chapter, I present the case of Mr. Justin Fordham. This chapter opens, like all cases in this study, with a portrait of Mr. Fordham, including his teaching background and a description of his school, classroom and teaching context at the time of his enrollment in the Beechwood Writing Project program during the summer of 2017 and 2017-2018 school year. Following this brief portrait, I address the first two research questions that guide this study: *1. How do teachers participating in a professional learning community focused on writing instruction envision an inquiry for improving writing in their teaching practice? 2. How do teachers enact their vision into their practice of teaching writing?*

Mr. Justin Fordham is a ninth-grade United States History teacher who began his teaching career at Silver Maple High School (SMHS) sixteen years ago as a pre-service intern and has been teaching there ever since. During his undergraduate studies, he majored in History with a concentration in United States History, a subject that he remains passionate about. He, like the other teachers in this study, did not set out to become a teacher. He recalled, “I felt teaching was a cop out at first when I went to college. Like if I'm going to major in History and then I end up teaching it, it's the easy way out type of thing.” That view changed when a cousin invited him to help her out at a Boys and Girls Club during his junior year in college and that experience with tutoring and helping kids opened his mind to teaching as a possible career path. The decision to add Education as a second major resulted in an added year of college which is also when he completed his teaching internship experience at SMHS; however, “it was the right call for me, I felt,” he explained.

When Mr. Fordham started at SMHS, he was hired to teach World History but jumped at the chance to take over a U.S. History position when a teacher left unexpectedly at the end of the summer right before he was to begin teaching. Since that first year, Mr. Fordham has consistently taught U.S. History classes at SMHS. He traces his love of U.S. History back to his childhood. He related, “In second grade, I could tell you all the presidents' names. My little baby, I actually recite all of the presidents to him when he eats in the hopes that he'll be that kid. I'm very geeky and nerdy about it. I love it and I'm passionate about it.” U.S. History was a junior level course at the start of his career; however, it was moved by the District to the ninth grade approximately ten years ago. Having taught every high school grade level, Mr. Fordham had predominantly taught ninth grade and frequently referred to himself as a ninth-grade teacher. Mr. Fordham, who was a National Board Certified Teacher, admitted feeling restless and uncertain about his future in teaching at the end of the 2017-018 school year; however, he was determined to remain a U.S. History teacher for the duration of his teaching career at SMHS, stating that he would quit “on the spot” if he were to be moved to another position.

According to Mr. Fordham, SMHS has had a reputation as one of the best schools in MGPSS since before he started working there, although he pointed out that the school may be resting on its laurels. After many years of stability, SMHS experienced more staff turnover in recent years. Mr. Fordham noted, “I still see teachers who I’m like I kind of know who you are. I just don’t exactly know your name. And at this point, I’m not asking. It’s too late now.” The 2500 students in the sprawling school came from two populations: those who had been selected for the school’s STEM magnet program and

those students who lived in the neighboring area who called SMHS their home school. According to Mr. Fordham, the magnet program students almost exclusively took Honors classes in their Humanities subjects as well as Honors classes in their STEM courses. At first glance, the demographics of the school population suggested that Mr. Fordham's classes would be diverse. During the 2017-2018 school year, 57% of the students identified as Black/ African American, 17% Hispanic/ Latino, 12% Asian and 12% White with 40% of students qualifying for free or reduced meals. In describing the student population in his research plan completed for the BWP Program, Mr. Fordham noted disparities between the student composition of his Honors classes and those in his on-grade level classes. He explained that his Honors classes were more ethnically diverse and included more female than male students. Mr. Fordham noted that several Honors students were either first-generation U.S. citizens or recent immigrants, which coupled with the general diversity of the students in those classes prompted him to describe his Honors classes as like a "model United Nations." His on-grade level classes, however, were much less diverse. None of the students in Mr. Fordham's on-grade level classes were from the STEM magnet program, and the vast majority of students were African-American with male students outnumbering females. Mr. Fordham reported that when he taught segregation, he pointed out these disparities to his students: "I always tell the kids, you know segregation because your school segregates." As was typical for teacher assignments at Silver Maple High School, during the 2017-2018 school year, Mr. Fordham's teaching load was evenly divided between Honors and on-grade level sections of U.S. History with three sections of each.

Mr. Fordham's temporary classroom sat at the edge of a large grouping of portable classroom buildings adjacent to the student parking lot at SMHS. Mr. Fordham had taught in this same portable classroom which he jokingly referred to as "a shack in a parking lot" since he started working at SMHS. The administration offered once to move him to a classroom within the school building, he recalled; however, he declined the offer preferring to retain the freedom afforded by his location outside of the main building. This decision, however, has left him physically removed from his professional colleagues. He pointed out the window of his classroom as he explained,

Most of the Social Studies are way down that way. Then there's one more Social Studies guy somewhere out there. So, I really am like, I am completely alone. More Social Studies teachers are in the building over there and some are in other places, and so I'm the one, the only, Social Studies person in this immediate area. So, yeah. It's interesting. I really am my own little thing here.

In addition to his physical distance from the school and his colleagues, he commented that he is also left alone by his administration but clarified that it's "not in a 'he's out there – whatever.' It's more, I think, they respect what I'm doing enough that they are like we don't need to bother him. So, I like my freedom out here and I do appreciate it." Mr. Fordham's sense of autonomy and isolated location prompted him to refer to his classroom as a "one room school district" on more than one occasion.

Upon entering the door to Mr. Fordham's classroom, the room was mostly unadorned with a few historical newspaper covers hanging loosely on the wall by the entrance. At the front of the long, narrow room stood a large whiteboard covered with handwritten diagrams outlining close reading strategies and argumentative writing concepts. It was April, and these notes had been on the board since the beginning of the school year. Within the narrow space, a Smartboard stood at the front of the white board

partially obscuring the view of the whiteboard's content. A teacher's desk faced out at student desks which filled the remainder of the classroom space and were arranged in several horizontal rows stretching to the back of the room and flanked by two long vertical rows lining the perimeter of the tight space to accommodate approximately thirty students in each class. There was no access to computers in Mr. Fordham's classroom; students produced all of the work in his class by hand. As Mr. Fordham's students entered the classroom, they followed expected procedures of picking up packets of primary source documents from the front of the room and made their way to their assigned seats where they sat in rows facing the front of the classroom working from their primary source packets and textbooks at their desks. As soon as the bell toned, Mr. Fordham, who frequently looked at his watch in order to not miss a moment of the 45 minutes of instructional time, said to the class, "If you can hear me, raise your hand."

Mr. Fordham's Vision

I do remember telling kids with the Victory Garden, it's like this is probably going to fail, and then we'll just figure out what to do when it fails, and that's what life is. You learn from your failures: totally fail, feel safe to fail, but just keep failing until something doesn't fail anymore. I kind of like that, knowing that I thought it all through. Whenever I fail, I don't get upset because, like in my mind, I knew what the vision was. I knew how to do this. If everybody was me, it would be awesome. I understand that everyone is not me, so yeah, this failed, but man, I can take stuff from this and use it for the next thing I do, and whatever little successes I have there, you know, will probably be outweighed by the failures, but I'll take those successes and get better and better.

Learning from Failure: A Vision for Professional Learning and Growth

When Mr. Fordham's shared this story about how he envisioned and created an action plan for a grand vegetable garden as a school-community partnership project, it stood out as a metaphor for his broad vision of learning. It also illustrated the significance

he places on writing as a catalyst for shifting vision into action. Through a course that he took during his master's degree program on how to write action plans, Mr. Fordham discovered a form of writing that resonated with his belief that writing helps to crystalize thoughts into concrete plans and how the creation of a written plan for a real audience generates momentum for action. "I feel it's like if I write something on a page, it doesn't do anything," he explained. "But, writing that on a page is going to motivate me and organize me to take action. That's what's exciting and that is the exciting part." The iterative process of conceiving of ambitious ideas, writing detailed action plans, sharing them with stakeholders, putting the plans into practice, evaluating their effectiveness and then revising or starting over again is a method that Mr. Fordham has developed for articulating his broad vision for learning, growth, and improvement. He explained:

Like, here's a problem. I'm going to understand this problem. And for me, the best way to understand it is to literally write it down. You know, how can I organize this, what's the structure of how I am doing this to really make sure that I am seeing the whole picture. So, when I write something up, the idea is that I see beginning, middle, end. I see all the little details, and I get it all in there and then I always understand that once I start doing it, it's going to go out the window, but I'm not going to be surprised by anything, and I'm actually going to be able to say, this is where we should be going. This is what we should be doing. Those are the kinds of things that motivate me more and more in my career now.

As a seasoned teacher, Mr. Fordham held a vision for his teaching career that included an actionable vision for his professional learning and growth that had expanded beyond his own classroom teaching to encompass his school and education, in general. This vision grew out of his own identity as a teacher-learner and was activated and refined through his practice of writing action plans. Mr. Fordham often described himself as "being at the tip of the spear" in his school setting which meant that he saw himself alone striving to influence and work toward a schoolwide vision of professional development. Mr.

Fordham was an early adopter of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), referring to it as his “self-appointed call to arms” because the standards had not been embraced by his colleagues or mandated by his administration even though the District literacy initiative was grounded in strengthening students’ literacy skills aligned to the CCSS. Mr. Fordham wanted his administration to lead the school in the direction of guiding changes in practice necessary for developing the complex teaching practices to address 21st Century student learning outcomes and was conflicted about taking a leadership role himself in that effort. However, as someone who I describe as vision-forward and, was, therefore, driven by his vision and uncompromising, taking action toward his vision was an imperative. This led him to assume an informal role of advocating for the CCSS within his school. While he had verbal support from his administration for his action plans and ideas, there was a lack of administrative follow-through that left him frequently disappointed. Even so, he was not deterred but instead concentrated his focus on how he might influence the role of professional development within his Social Studies department.

One of the action plans that Mr. Fordham developed during the 2016-2017 school year was a vision for how to change the way that professional development was delivered in his department to one that remade the professional development experience into a teacher-led learning workshop in line with the knowledge-in-practice paradigm whereby teachers examine their own teaching practices and engage in the study of craft through self-reflection and coaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Mr. Fordham recounted how he presented his vision for this professional development model to his principal through an action plan:

I was tired of the way we were doing it in the school, and what I said was what you should do is on one month, in my case, all the U.S. History teachers email each other on a chain: What is one problem we are having in our classroom in regard to reading, writing, and thinking? And we have to keep it to that: reading, writing, or thinking. And then once people settle on a problem, it's who can do a 20-minute example of what you do in your class to address reading, writing, thinking like strategies, concepts, ideas. And then, can we get two or three of you to volunteer to do this? And then, you treat us as your students, and then it's like a teacher's lab. You teach, and we act as your students, but then we tell you this would work, this wouldn't work, and then we discuss like what would work in my class, what am I afraid of about this, what do I think is good about this, what would I change about this, and then once you go through all of that, you end by writing a little reflection so that the administrator leaves you alone.

Mr. Fordham envisioned transforming the professional development in his school from what he saw as a scattershot approach to one that was community-based and practice-focused yet also designed to satisfy accountability requirements, which he felt would make the approach attractive and useful to teachers. His vision hinged on the involvement of a willing group of teachers who would buy into his vision for a professional safe space to learn from failure; however, this was not what he found with his own U.S. History colleagues who he described as comfortable maintaining the status quo.

It was his dissatisfaction with this experience as well as other disappointing professional development workshops that spurred Mr. Fordham, out of a sense of frustration, to seek out other professional development opportunities outside of his school that addressed the teaching of writing. He knew that in spite of the problems with the school's training, he wanted professional development that would help him better align his instruction in his U.S. History classes with the CCSS. It was after these experiences with professional development at his school that he decided to respond to an email advertising the Beechwood Writing Project's program.

At the information session for the BWP, teachers were asked to share their ideal vision for professional development. Mr. Fordham shared that he envisioned having a safe place to fail where other teachers would provide feedback and a supportive space to work on practice, similar to the professional development action plan that he had attempted with his department at his school. He recalled:

Maybe it's a little self-critical, but I fail a lot, but I never worry about it because I do take the time to think it through. Yeah, that didn't work. I'll wait a little bit, lick my wounds, and then someone will say something, and it will lead me to like, no, I've got a better plan, and I'll go through this whole process again, and I'll get really jazzed to start writing it up all over again, you know, a different thing all over again.

Mr. Fordham brought this specific vision for his own professional learning to the BWP Program in the summer of 2017.

Hosting a Salon: A Vision for the Teacher's Role

Mr. Fordham's vision for his role in his classroom had undergone significant changes since he began shifting his focus from content delivery to creating opportunities for developing literacy and higher order thinking skills. He recalled:

I think when I started, I wanted kids to be as passionate as I was about U.S. History. I now am more on, I just want you to learn on your own, and I think that's my goal as a teacher.

Of all the changes that he has made to his practice, developing a new vision for his role and enacting that new role in the classroom has caused him the most discomfort. When he started teaching U.S. History, he envisioned his role as that of the storyteller, conveying Nationalism through the oral tradition of passing down significant historical stories that would steep students in a shared history and understanding of what it meant to be an American. Telling historical stories to his students was a beloved part of his job that tapped into his passion for history and connected that passion to his students, often

touching them on a personal level. Mr. Fordham still believed that preserving and giving voice to historical stories is critical to ensuring that we continue to have a common purpose as a people in this country. He recalled:

I used to do this big lecture on the Holocaust where I was very proud of myself. I made kids cry because, you know, getting them to understand things and see things without being like graphic or horrible or anything, but you know, having them connect emotionally, like that idea of empathy, and really understanding empathy. This year we're going to read something, and it's like there's so much stuff I want to share on this, but it shouldn't be about me sharing it, it should be about you learning.

While Mr. Fordham stated that he believed he needed to shift his role to create opportunities for students to develop literacy skills, his vision for that role and facilitating student ownership of learning had not yet been actualized. He felt that he was in a middle ground or transitional stage as he moved from storyteller at one extreme of his earlier teaching vision to a new vision of being a salon host that at the other extreme. Mr. Fordham's vision of a trajectory of professional growth was a further reflection of his vision-forward stance and his tolerance for his own learning process. He relied on this vision to provide direction and motivation for the learning needed to change his teaching practice.

True to his passion for history, Mr. Fordham's vision of the *salon* was derived from a historical context when salons were social gatherings for intellectual and cultural discussions under the hospitality of an inspiring host. Mr. Fordham described his vision of the classroom salon as a space where students would be able to engage in rich discussions that were relevant to their lives while simultaneously accountable to the U.S. History content material. Through discussions in the salon-style classroom, students would present their own ideas based on rigorous research and personal experience to

benefit the learning of the entire group. In a salon-style discussion, students would be engaged in Mr. Fordham's vision for argument-making as they synthesized information across multiple sources, developed their understanding of historical significance within the context of current events.

Before coming to the BWP Program, Mr. Fordham had already made a conscious shift in his instructional approach to stress thematic trends instead of a straight chronology as a step in this direction, creating more opportunities for students to discover how historical events are interconnected. He had not come to terms with how to assume the facilitative role that would structure the level of preparation necessary for students to truly be prepared for a salon-like classroom. Recognizing that he was not there yet, he shared his vision for what a salon on the tactics and legacy of the Civil Rights Movement might look like with his students if he were able to enact his role as a salon host:

I would imagine what it would be is kids having that skill set to read on their own, would go read whatever they wanted. And then, it would be more about the structured approach of how to talk about it. Whatever content you bring in, that's the content you bring because I know you're going to pick the right sources. I know you're going to pick the most relevant news stories to make that connection, which I think is a lot to ask...But it would be that idea of, well, we're going to talk about Civil Rights, what's going on in your life that you think is relevant to this? You go find sources that make that connection for you. You then also think about your audience, the students in this class. You bring in information that you think will help them understand, and then we're going to center all of this around the group trying to address an answer to or create an argument or arguments that could answer this question, and that that's how I would imagine it going.

In this vision, the role of the teacher was limited to guiding a structured discussion, not teaching the critical reading skills needed or facilitating students' preparation for that discussion. Mr. Fordham noted that he thought it was a lot to ask students to already have these skills as ninth graders and to be capable of making their own informed decisions

about what to bring to class that would be relevant to their learning and that of their peers. This vision was therefore not one that Mr. Fordham was able to articulate in terms of specific actions that he would take to reach it. This vision reflected Mr. Fordham's concerns that his students did not come to ninth grade with the literacy skills that he thought they should have although he was not sure exactly what skills he should expect of a ninth grader. Mr. Fordham frequently expressed how his ninth graders had a wide range of reading abilities and preparation for high school that made this vision of the salon one that he could not see a clear path toward reaching.

In the meantime, Mr. Fordham described his current vision for his role as that of a gatekeeper. The gatekeeper role was one that he was also still working to master but that he felt was a necessary role for him to play in order to sufficiently structure and scaffold students' progress toward the independent learning he felt was necessary for their current and future success. Although the salon host vision involved entrusting students with considerable responsibility over their learning, Mr. Fordham's vision of the gatekeeper was focused on his role of providing structure as a facilitator of learning. He said:

It's really my job to be the gatekeeper. Here's the task. Here's how you do the task. Do the task. I'll walk around. If you have questions, I'll help you. If you have questions, you can ask the people sitting in your little groups, but it's my job to create the challenge. It's their job to accomplish the challenge, and I guess that's how I view it now.

As the gatekeeper, Mr. Fordham viewed his role as ensuring that there was a clear goal and predictability to the process so that students were prepared for the independent learning aspects. He also emphasized within this role the need for students to be sufficiently challenged but to have resources in order to reach for that challenge. Noting his struggle with relinquishing control, Mr. Fordham concluded, "I guess I think it's

going to take me a couple of years to figure out how to take on this new role and like the gatekeeper one I feel will take a while, but I think yeah, the goal is that vision to get to the salon.” Being vision-forward meant that Mr. Fordham had in mind a trajectory for altering his role in the classroom to extend more ownership of learning to students. This trajectory included incremental and actionable steps, such as his transition to the role of gatekeeper, that he could take toward achieving his vision while also holding an ideal that he was working toward reaching.

Working Toward Flow: A Vision for Student Learning

Although Mr. Fordham was still working out how to achieve his vision for his role in the classroom, he had a very specific vision for what he wanted students to leave his class having learned. He explained that he thought about this vision a lot and that he shared his vision for student learning with parents at Back to School Night:

It's always what I say to the parents, ‘I don't care if your child leaves my class not knowing who George Washington is. I care about that when they are actually interested in figuring out who he is, they know what sources to go to. They know how to read those sources, they know how to evaluate them, and to form an argument to create their own understanding.

Within this statement to parents was reflected Mr. Fordham’s shifting focus from an emphasis on History content to one that he had aligned with selected competencies of the Common Core State Standards that he thought were most important for him to focus on in his class. Also articulated in this statement was Mr. Fordham’s personal conviction about this vision expressed in terms of what he “cared” about it instead of what the curriculum or his department emphasized.

In order to balance his own role as a facilitator of literacy skills with students’ needs, Mr. Fordham needed to reconsider his vision for how students would engage as

learners. During his time in the BWP Program, Mr. Fordham latched onto Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1991) theory of flow also known as the psychology of optimal experience. According to Csikszentmihalyi's theory, flow is an optimal psychological state that occurs when one is engaged in an activity that is appropriately challenging and engaging, resulting in a concentrated state of focus that leads to deep learning and satisfaction. As Mr. Fordham's elaborated on this vision for student learning, he referred to an observation of one group of his students working in class to that illustrated this vision. He explained:

[They had] no concept of time...they [were] totally just trying to figure this out, and they didn't finish their thesis, but listening to them and kind of looking at it the whole time, it was like, time didn't matter to them, they were in, getting this figured out.

In order to achieve that theory of flow, Mr. Fordham believed that students would need to be so comfortable with the structure of what they are trying to do that it receded to the "background noise." He further explained,

They are not wasting their time saying, 'How do I do this? What's the?' It's beaten into them: this is the repetitive system. You don't have to worry about it as much now, you can just concentrate and just try to get into that flow.

Within his role as the gatekeeper, Mr. Fordham saw himself facilitating the repetitive system that would help students concentrate. Underpinning Mr. Fordham's interpretation of flow theory was his belief in the need to silence information overload. In the personal piece of writing that he produced for the BWP, he argued that both teachers and students are overwhelmed by information today, and that they lacked the higher-order thinking skills to manage all of that information. He wrote, "With Google, more and more people are surrendering their higher-order thinking skills to basic Google

searches and settl[ing] on a simplified understanding of issues.” Mr. Fordham reasoned that having a logistical, sequential approach would facilitate managing information and provide access to flow. Mr. Fordham did not have an articulated vision for how students would be actively engaged in the process as learners or how student differences might require different approaches in order to achieve a state where learning would occur. Consistent with his vision-forward stance, Mr. Fordham’s vision focused on how students would be able to access this process for transfer to their other high school classes and even into their college work, further equipping them to be competitive in the 21st Century workforce.

Preparing for the Robot Apocalypse: A Vision of Learning for the 21st Century

Mr. Fordham’s vision for connecting student learning to 21st Century society was informed by his history background and his concerns for the future. Although he consciously choose to not discuss his own concerns about current news events with his students, his instructional decisions, including his emphasis on specific content over other content, reflected the significance he placed on learning from the past and making connections between past events and what students needed to know as citizens in the present and in the future. He noted several times during our meetings that he spent almost the entire first quarter teaching the Industrial Revolution because of the parallels he wanted students to recognize between those events and current concerns about job prospects. There were several lessons that Mr. Fordham wanted students to glean from focusing on that time period. He said:

I figure if I can really teach them that - look at how horrible for all those people who didn't change over and look at all the social and political and economic changes that happened; that's what we are going through right now. It's funny like how much it's the same thing, and I really want the kids to see that, so they

realize the world is upending itself. You better learn to be an independent thinker. You better learn to read and comprehend because if you cannot, there's just not going to be jobs for you.

Much of Mr. Fordham's concern for students' futures stemmed from his own research and news reports that forecast a bleak future job market that he admits has led to "apocalyptic thinking." In one of the assignments he created for the BWP, he posed a series of questions that reflected his worries about a projected takeover of 38% of jobs by robots as reported in a recent study:

What happens to my students if they enter the job market in the Information Age and cannot demonstrate higher-order thinking? What if they never practiced and rehearsed in a structured, repetitive way, the mental steps of making an argument through synthesizing information from multiple sources? If they lack these skills will they be the first generation that cannot earn decent employment because a robot can do the job better?

In his writing, he further developed his vision for teachers' expanded roles in preparing students for the future. He argued, teachers need to move beyond "just content providers," to become skill-developers and technology masters. He concluded with a personal proclamation, "...[M]y fear of the robot apocalypse has motivated me to keep to this style of teaching as a moral obligation to prepare students for the 21st Century workforce they will be entering." Mr. Fordham's personal convictions about students being prepared for the future was the connecting thread that linked the facets of his vision and motivated him to take action.

How We Get to H.O.T.S: A Curricular Vision

While Mr. Fordham's shift from a U.S. History II content focus to a literacy skills-oriented focus had been in the works for a year before his decision to attend the program, he credited the professional learning experience with deepening his

understanding and solidifying his commitment. His interest in connecting his content to the literacy skills started with his own self-initiated immersion in the Common Core documents when they were first issued in 2012. As mentioned earlier, when he found the professional development he received at his school on the standards wanting, he dove into the documents on his own, which he is apt to do, to get a more complete and thorough understanding. He stated that the CCSS for English Language Arts are “a fantastic tool for educators to organize their curriculum around.”

His work with the CCSS documents led him to broaden his curricular vision to include interdisciplinary connections to other content areas, particularly English, although he felt that formal support was lacking for making interdisciplinary connections at his school. He stated his firm belief that all content teachers, not only English teachers, have a responsibility to do their part to incorporate the literacy skills from the Common Core Standards into their content areas. Specifically, he envisioned all teachers selecting at least one aspect of the Common Core standards to include in their lessons. If students are to master literacy skills in high school, he reasoned, subject area teachers need to take ownership of the Common Core and implement them through a focused approach.

Mr. Fordham made frequent references to his “pyramid” when describing his instructional vision (Figure 2). Based on the framework of higher order thinking skills, Mr. Fordham developed this pyramid before his participation in the BWP Program for his teacher website to illustrate for students the value of developing literacy skills in his U.S. History course that would help them in college and in their careers. At the base of the pyramid Mr. Fordham placed the foundational practices of analyzing secondary sources, for example. In the middle, students synthesized information, and toward the top of the

pyramid, the complexity of the literacy tasks increased to include demonstrating knowledge. At the top of the pyramid, students were able to apply the knowledge they have gained to understand the world around them now and in their future college, career, and citizenship.

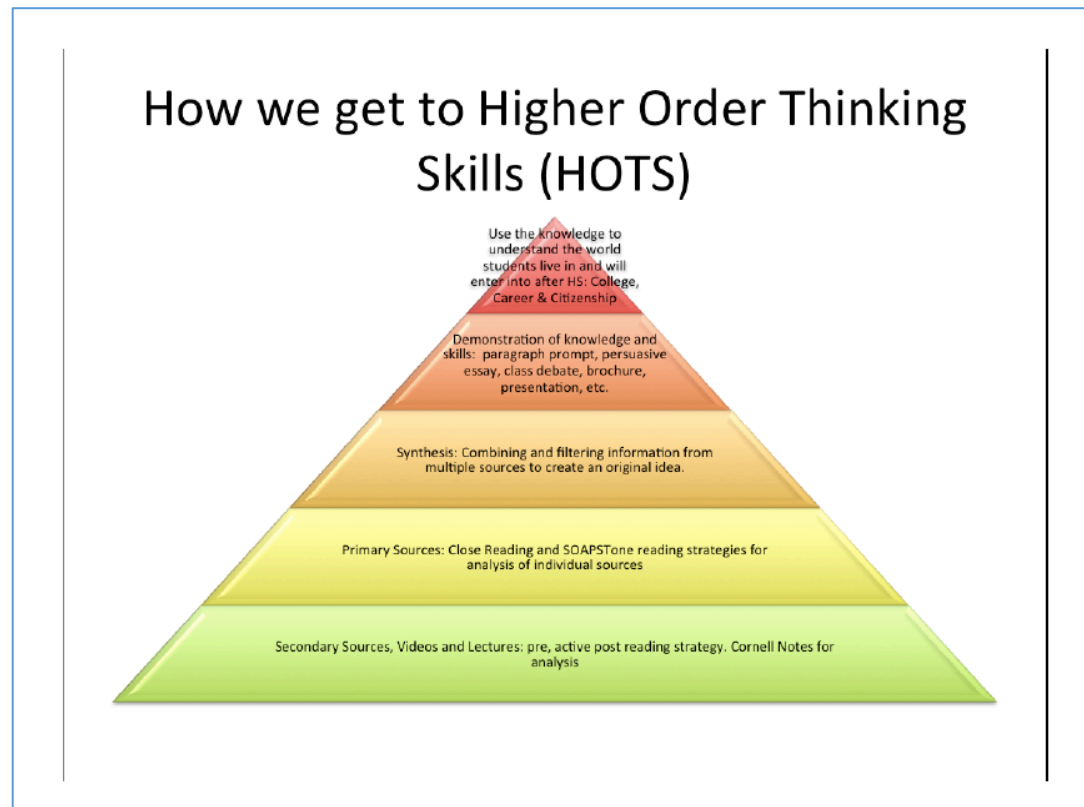


Figure 2: Mr. Fordham's Pyramid for How We Get to Higher Order Thinking Skills

As Mr. Fordham explained his vision for the integration of reading, writing, and critical thinking represented in the tiers of the pyramid, he concluded that he had always had a similar vision for using primary and secondary sources with his students but noted that the Common Core Standards documents provided him with the structure and conceptual language to more fully and intentionally integrate specific literacy skills in his classroom. He explained, “When the Common Core came out, I was kind of like, I one

hundred percent bought into that vision. Yeah, this is what we should be teaching. This is what we should be thinking about when we are teaching.”

Vision for Inquiry: Argument Writing in U.S. History II

Critical for Mr. Fordham’s interrogation of his own teaching was the experience of discovery during daily personal writing during the summer, a core element of the BWP Program model. On the first day of the Summer Institute, the Director hung a handwritten poster that stated, “Writing is putting ideas into words.” She shared the BWP philosophy for the teacher-as-writer strand of the program which engaged all participants and coaches in the practice of developing a piece of personal writing for publication through engaging in writing process activities in writing groups. Teachers developed a bank of possible pieces from morning writing prompts generated during Morning Pages, a 30-minute period at the start of each day dedicated to developing personal writing. The Director explained that writing allows implicit thinking to become explicit. She followed this statement with the speculation that most people, especially teachers, rarely have time for making their thinking explicit, including their dreams and fears. “Morning pages is our time to do that,” she explained.

It was through this experience of writing during Morning Pages that Mr. Fordham uncovered and made explicit for himself some of his own questions about his teaching and his concerns about education. He stated in a reflection at the end of the Summer Institute, “In that initial writing, I realized how passionate I have become in addressing how technology is changing our world and how that is forcing teachers to change how they approach our craft.” This theme was one that he continued to explore throughout his time in the BWP Program. He further reflected that writing during Morning Pages

“helped focus my mind on some key issues” which began to surface during the first prompt, “This I believe...” In this writing, Mr. Fordham explored his beliefs about the impact of technology and the challenges young people face in the Information Age. In his reflection, he stated that it was through the writing process, “I found I am very concerned with how an unlimited access to information in the age of the Internet can overwhelm students if they do not have the skills to understand the information.”

Within these pieces of writing, Mr. Fordham was using the writing process itself as a method for examining and making meaning of his own questions about teaching and developed his own metaphor to guide his understanding and theorizing about what he saw as students’ challenges.

As Mr. Fordham continued to develop his thinking through this piece of writing, he was not clear where the writing was taking him. He recalled in our final interview that composing this piece of writing was one of the few writing experiences he had ever undertaken without a specific structure in mind. He stated:

That was really worrisome to me because it kept getting longer and longer, and I'm like because it was one of those initial writing prompt things, and I was just like I'm going to go with this. And then it was like I don't know where this is going. And it was great. That was actually really great, and I didn't know where it was going. And then knowing that people were going to read it, and that it had to actually go somewhere and then trying to connect it all. That was actually really helpful. There was a lot of great things about doing the Writing Project that helped, but I think that one writing project probably was the most. It kind of solidified a lot of ideas I had in my head.

As he wrote a second and then a third draft, he recalled applying the strategy of “show, don’t tell” that had been discussed during the second day of Morning Pages. He remarked that he imagined that the concept was most likely well understood by English teachers,

but for him the act of “showing” in his writing was a new concept. In a reflection he wrote at the end of the summer, he stated:

My writing has always been more tell based than show, but I decided to be adventurous and attempted to show my passion for this subject on technology. It was during these drafts that I decided to really go for constructing an analogy to help teachers think about the importance of technology more.

As Mr. Fordham went on to revise his initial Morning Pages into a polished personal essay with a teacher audience in mind, the act of writing itself served as a tool that helped to “crystallize” his thinking and “solidify” his intentions. The act of employing the “show, don’t tell” strategy and articulating his thinking through writing became an impetus to action for Mr. Fordham, who referred to this piece of writing as like his “bible” for the year and led him to pose the following question for his inquiry: “What are the best approaches to teach students to argue in their writing?”

After many drafts, Mr. Fordham’s final piece of writing argued that students need to develop the stamina and skills to be independent learners equipped to “sail their own boats” in the turbulent waters of the Information Age. He also argued that teachers needed to adapt to these forces and be willing to leave the safety of their comfortable “houseboats” to confront the challenges facing students. Mr. Fordham invoked the metaphor of *learning to sail together* to further illustrate his ultimate vision for a mutually beneficial and necessary relationship between teachers and students. He stated, “As teachers we should navigate this Internet Ocean on a sailboat and crew it with our students.” Developing these sailing skills, which were a metaphor for literacy, critical thinking, and argument writing skills would then equip students to have a much better chance of being successful in the Information Age. If students have the skills to “sail,”

Mr. Fordham argued, they can adapt to sailing other boats through the “high seas” of change. He elaborated, “Kids need to be able to constantly learn as adults. They need to be able to read on their own, synthesize on the own, and create their own knowledge and their own ideas.” This metaphor of sailing together clearly connected the facets of Mr. Fordham’s vision for the teacher’s role as a facilitator of learning and students as capable independent learners with his curricular focus of developing students’ transferable literacy skills through history content and preparing students to be competitive for the 21st Century society.

Summary

After attending the BWP Summer Institute, Mr. Fordham’s began the 2017-2018 school year energized and excited to implement his envisioned changes to his teaching practice. He had been teaching U.S. History II for many years through storytelling and assessment practices that focused more on recall of historical information and facts than on fostering critical thinking skills or examining historical events through a lens of argumentation. In recent years, through his immersion in the CCSS documents, he had started to incorporate more close reading and literacy objectives into his teaching; however, it was through writing and research during the BWP Program that he conceptualized an actionable focus for his vision for placing argumentative writing at the center of his instruction. Mr. Fordham intended to develop a systematic approach that would teach students through repetitive practice how to synthesize information across primary and secondary sources to develop an argument. With his vision-forward stance, he was guided by his commitment to preparing his students for their futures, including their college preparation and career prospects. He set out to share ownership of learning

with his students, vowing to leave the comfort he felt in his role as the storyteller behind in favor of working toward facilitating students' learning, helping them to achieve "flow." He also intended to take the risk of sharing his vision with other Social Studies teachers in his school hoping to shake them out of their comfort zones into re-envisioning their own instruction to target literacy objectives. While Mr. Fordham was unsure how exactly he would shift his role in the classroom to accomplish his goals, he felt it was a moral obligation to do so.

Mr. Fordham's Vision Enacted

Mr. Fordham reorganized his United States History course around his decision to put argument writing at the center of his instruction. At the end of the school year, he expressed the significance of this decision to his teaching:

I felt like by doing this, it really made me like become solidified. Like I know there's a thousand and one different ways to teach, but this is now my way. I buy in a hundred percent and this is the way I'm doing it, you know, and I feel, I'm big on the, you know, we need to prepare the kids for the future society and I'm big on all that stuff, and I feel this is my way of doing that. If I can teach you this skill, there's a lot of application to it, and so I'm okay taking the ninth-grade class and just making it all about this, like how to make an argument.

With his vision-forward stance guiding his decision-making at the beginning of the school year, Mr. Fordham shifted emphasis from U.S. History content to make time for students to work on argument writing. Mr. Fordham's vision was broadly applicable to all students; therefore, his focus was on developing a systematic approach that would allow him to integrate his curriculum with the Common Core Standards rather than on assessing his specific students' instructional needs before proceeding with his plans.

A Lesson Cycle for Argument Writing in U.S. History II

In the absence of guidance within his Social Studies department or from curriculum documents, Mr. Fordham went to the CCSS for the English Language Arts document for guidance as he made his plans for the year. Although Mr. Fordham had been integrating the CCSS into his teaching since 2012, he reflected, “I don't think I ever really concentrated on arguments as much until I, until that summer course.” As the year began, he recalled thinking to himself:

And then it was when I got into the school year, I was like, why don't I just do this every lesson? That was the big change of why don't I just literally do this every lesson where before I think I had like my little pyramid and it was more about they can just talk about stuff or they could just write it up, you know, without really giving thought to it should be an argument. It became everything was an argument. They had to make an argument in everything they wrote. And that, I think, was a big, big change and that was when a lot of what I was doing kind of clicked where I'm like, oh, this is going to make sense to the kids more if I can keep it, just everything is about them making an argument.

As a consequence of this decision to make everything an argument, Mr. Fordham restructured his lesson planning process. He crafted new essential questions, modifying the questions from the curriculum guide, as needed, in order to make the curricular questions more argumentative in keeping with the CCSS. These questions then served as a starting point for the rest of his planning. Although the curriculum guide provided a list of suggested sources, Mr. Fordham reported that he selected his own sources for his lessons and then selected the specific standards that he wanted to incorporate from the CCSS, choosing one reading standard and either a writing or a speaking standard. Then he reported he would “go backwards from that pyramid and say what do I want them to produce? And then, so what steps do I have to do to get them there?”

Mr. Fordham then developed a cycle of six steps taking students through the literacy skills and building the content knowledge that would lead to a culminating argumentative writing or speaking assessment (See Figure 3 for an example of the six-step cycle). As is the case with academic standards in general, the CCSS specify the “what” but not the “how” of instructional practices (Troi & Olinghouse, 2013, p. 345). Therefore, Mr. Fordham developed his own cycle which aligned with the tiers of his How We Get to H.O.T.S. pyramid. The cycle began with students reading chapters in the textbook and taking notes using the Cornell note-taking strategy. Then in step two, Mr. Fordham lectured on the eight-step method for writing a persuasive essay as a reminder to students. During step three, students read, analyzed, and then responded to primary source documents employing a close reading strategy which focused students’ attention on identifying and analyzing the context and significance of a primary source and deepening their developing knowledge of the historical events from their textbook reading and Cornell notes. The class discussion that followed this text analysis was what Mr. Fordham referred to as *synthesis*. Mr. Fordham defined synthesis on his pyramid of “How we get to Higher Order Thinking Skills” mentioned previously (Figure 3) as “combining and filtering information from multiple sources to create an original idea.” During step four, students selected evidence for their arguments and prepared graphic organizers, as appropriate. Then for step five, students developed an outline to support a thesis statement for their argumentative writing response. This step was scaffolded with students completing it in groups at the beginning of the year and independently toward the end of the year. Finally, students produced and submitted a final draft of the argumentative writing response to the essential question. This final step included mini-

steps of the writing process, such as editing their writing to produce a final product: an out-of-class five paragraph essay or an in-class timed writing assessment.

Early in the year, students participated in these mini-steps in small groups or independently, if they chose to. Toward the end of the year, all students were required to write their assessment responses independently. All word-processed writing assessments were then submitted to Mr. Fordham on paper and also through turnitin.com, online plagiarism checker. Mr. Fordham assessed each written essay during the year using the same persuasive essay rubric that he had developed. Once this assessment step was complete, the cycle began again with a new curricular focus and essential question.

Procedure

Steps	Direction
Step 1	Student will take Cornell Notes for Ch. 21.1 and Ch. 21.2 in the textbook. Both assignments will be graded as a classwork grade using the Cornell Notes Rubric.
Step 2	Teacher will lecture students on the 8 steps of writing a persuasive essay.
Step 3	Students will read and analyze the 10 documents found in the DBQ packet "What Caused the Great Depression?" Students will use the close reading strategy with the SOAPStone reading strategy to complete this task.
Step 4	Students will use the Thesis sentence graphic organizer to collect 9 pieces of evidence to form the three arguments (claims) used to persuasively argue the three leading factors that caused the Great Depression. This assignment will be graded as an assessment grade using the Thesis sentence rubric.
Step 5	Students will outline their five-paragraph persuasive essay in class.
Step 6	Students will type their five-paragraph persuasive essay on the causes of the Great Depression. Students will turn in a hard copy in class and an electronic copy on www.turnitin.com . Persuasive essay will only be graded if both versions are turned in on the due date. Assignment will be graded as an assessment grade (0-100 points) using the Persuasive Essay rubric.

Figure 3: Mr. Fordham's Six Step Cycle for Causes of the Great Depression

The essential question(s) and the standards Mr. Fordham selected served to anchor other planning decisions including selection of supplementary sources, mini lectures, and the focus of class discussions so that all classroom activities led to students being prepared to respond to the assessment prompt. In the writing, students would take a position on the guiding or essential question and use the evidence they had collected through their reading, note-taking, and class activities to support their response. Students were encouraged to use their notes on this assessment. For the first lesson that I observed, students were working to develop thesis statements to answer the assessment question, *What caused the Great Depression?* As the year went on, the assessment questions became more complex. For example, for the third lesson I observed, which coincided with one of the final units of the year, the students were preparing to address, *How did non-violent and Black power philosophies shape the tactics and legacy of the Civil Rights Movement?*

Table 4 below provides a snapshot of the four lesson observations I conducted in Mr. Fordham's classroom at his invitation during the spring of 2018. Participating teachers were asked to select lessons for observation that aligned with their inquiry focus and envisioned reforms to their practice. As I was looking to observe a variety of classroom practices and topics, three of these observations were conducted during different units of study. I also observed three different classes. A fourth observation of an on-grade level class was added on the same day as the third observation of an Honors class so that Mr. Fordham and I would have a common frame of reference for discussing differences he had mentioned between his Honors and his on-grade level students in terms of their learning needs and progress. Detailed in the table below, each of the

observations focused on one of the steps in the sequence of Mr. Fordham’s envisioned cycle for argument writing previously described. Mr. Fordham selected lessons for me to observe that focused on steps in the process that he felt were most indicative of his vision for enacting new practices in his teaching; therefore, these observations were conducted during steps when Mr. Fordham could be observed actively engaged with students in teaching and learning activities as opposed to steps involving independent notetaking or independent writing activities.

Table 4

<i>Mr. Fordham’s Lesson Observations</i>				
Lesson Date	Class Observed	Lesson Content Topic	Lesson Literacy Focus	Lesson Elements
4/12/2018	Period 2 45 minutes Honors 9 (29 students)	Great Depression	Step 5: Revising thesis statement drafts and developing outlines in groups	Teacher and small student group conferences on content and organization
5/3/2018	Period 2 45 minutes Honors 9 (27 students)	Marshall Plan	Step 3: Analyzing primary source documents	Large group lesson on Marshall Plan and independent document analysis using SOAPSTone strategy
5/16/2018	Period 4 45 minutes Honors 9 (22 students)	Civil Rights Ideologies	Step 3: Analyzing secondary and primary source documents	Large group discussion of video sources, independent reading, pair, and large group discussion of

				essential question
5/16/2018	Period 5 45 minutes On Grade Level 9 (22 students)	Civil Rights Ideologies	Step 3: Analyzing secondary and primary source documents	Large group discussion of video sources, teacher led reading, pair and large group discussion of essential question

Training for Argument Writing: Enacting A Curricular Vision

Mr. Fordham's highly structured six-step system for argument writing shifted his emphasis in the classroom from his previous focus on teaching U.S. History content to a new focus on the skills students needed for responding to text in the form of argument writing. Mr. Fordham's approach represented a complex and specific theoretical perspective of writing development. Although he did not have any formalized training in writing instruction except for the experience within the BWP, Mr. Fordham held a technical perspective of how students develop as writers which guided his approach. In keeping with a technical perspective, the purpose of Mr. Fordham's writing instruction was to provide students with the necessary skills and processes in order to produce a specific writing task effectively (Beach et al, 2016). For Mr. Fordham, writing was a product, a mode of assessment, evidence of learning content, and structured for communication, which is consistent with this perspective. He explained that the structure and culminating product where students presented their knowledge in writing, "that's definitely something that I got from the course, like I want to have this structure like a systematic way of building it every time."

Mr. Fordham's beliefs about students' writing challenges were also aligned with a technical perspective. He believed that his students came to ninth grade from middle school unable to make the transition from thinking to constructing a written response and that they needed structure to get their ideas into a form for an audience. He stated:

...I find with the ninth graders, a lot of them, they understand everything. It's all jumbled in their head. It's like I always go with this idea, like 'you know everything, but it's in your head like a washing machine.'

Mr. Fordham's beliefs that students' ideas were stuck in their heads was something that remained unexamined during the time of this study but which he frequently referred to as a rationale for his structured approach. Mr. Fordham theorized that providing repetitive practice with synthesizing sources would help students clarify their thinking as they activated their higher-level thinking skills. He described how he had implemented this new approach during the year:

We always start with secondary sources and then primary sources, and then instead of just skipping over it, really stressing synthesis. So, the main part I am working with them on is just synthesis. I let them do their research, and I don't know how it came out. I'm only going to see in the synthesis in what I graded here (pointing to a student's written response) and what I discuss with them, and then the rest of it is them on their own.

Mr. Fordham's approach to providing structure for students to engage in synthesis was consistent with his technical perspective. He was focused on students' engagement in the psychological processes of synthesis that would result in the development of their writing abilities (Beach et al., 2016). As Mr. Fordham held the perspective of writing as a linear sequence toward creating a written product, it was significant that he added a new practice of working with students *during* the writing process to develop their synthesis skills "instead of just skipping over it." This action reflected new beliefs he had

developed about how to help his students improve as writers and which represented a shift in his thinking toward recognizing the significance of process and social interaction in writing development.

Mr. Fordham intended for his approach to be like training. He believed that students needed to put in the time and effort to learn the structure and to practice the reading skills that would eventually lead to the development of higher-level skills; however, he took a long view of this development and stated repeatedly that he did not expect students to master these skills in ninth grade. Consistent with his technical perspective, Mr. Fordham viewed learning textual features as the building blocks in the repertoire of writing skills that would result in students having the ability to perform the writing tasks independently (Beach et al., 2016). Mr. Fordham remarked that students needed training because they lacked “grit” and often opted for the “path of least resistance.” When students struggled with learning his system early in the year and complained about the number of steps, Mr. Fordham reported in his “Research Data Collection and Analysis” at the mid-year point of the BWP Program that he asked students directly how they would develop an argument on their own if left to their own devices. He admitted that “many [said] that they would first come up with what they were going to prove, then skim through the sources until they [found] evidence to support what they [were] doing. Some even [told] me they would just Google the answer.” This response confirmed for Mr. Fordham the need for his system and cemented his conviction that students needed training in the system. Mr. Fordham’s focus on training students so that they would develop perseverance was also consistent with a technical perspective of writing development.

Synthesizing sources training. Mr. Fordham was quick to note that he was aware that there were many tools that could be employed for analyzing sources and engaging in synthesis including tools that were designed specifically for History classes to use with historical sources; however, he selected one tool, the SOAPSTone close reading strategy, to use with every primary source document analysis with all of his classes, both Honors and on-grade level. In the absence of collegial support from his Social Studies department, Mr. Fordham turned to the English department in his school for collegial support and adopted the SOAPSTone strategy because it was what the English department used for close reading. This choice also reflected his vision-forward orientation that the teachers in his school should be working in a coordinated effort to address the CCSS schoolwide.

In the SOAPSTone textual analysis process, readers identify the Speaker, the Occasion, the Audience, the Purpose, the Subject, and the Tone of the document. Mr. Fordham felt that the SOAPSTone strategy contributed to students' training across subject areas and also provided an effective starting point for discussion because instead of "trying to tackle everything," students would be able to delve more deeply into the specific topics generated during analysis. He related that it was also open-ended enough to be applicable to any primary source and provided flexibility for students to bring forth their own ideas during discussion.

When I observed Mr. Fordham's "quietest" Honors class that he described as having only a handful of students who "willingly participate" during their lesson on the Cold War, students were independently reading George Marshall's 1947 Harvard commencement speech which is credited with launching the post-war European Aid

Program known as the Marshall Plan. As students prepared to read, it was evident that the students were well-versed in the SOAPSTone strategy and that students had internalized the structure as Mr. Fordham had intended. Even before students received instructions to work through the process of identifying the elements of the SOAPSTone acronym, I observed students preparing to record their answers for each element, writing the acronym S-O-A-P-S-tone vertically on their papers without being prompted.

Mr. Fordham's stated that his intention with using the SOAPSTone strategy was to get at "a deeper understanding than just reciting facts in writing." During the lesson, Mr. Fordham asked students to "go deeper" to move beyond the basic information to develop an interpretation of Marshall's philosophy, or "point of view" from the SOAPSTone strategy, in the speech:

Mr. Fordham: All right. So, the purpose is to provide aid to Europe. Get support for that. Why do we want to give aid to Europe?

Student: to prevent Soviet expansion.

Mr. Fordham: Very good, to prevent Soviet expansion. Containment. That now leads to point of view. Write down what you think the point of view was. (Students write). Go ahead and talk to the person next to you. What is Marshall's point of view? (Students discuss). All right, who can tell us point of view?

Student: I said the point of view is against expansion.

Mr. Fordham: All good. No, that's very good. Um, they're against the expansion of Communism. I want us to go just a little deeper than that.

Student: (undecipherable)

Mr. Fordham: Good. Again, you guys are right in the ballpark of where I want you to be. Um, let me put it to you with this, how will aid stop the spread of Communism? What's like the ideological principle here that he believes in?

Student: He believes in the spread of the ideas of Capitalism.

Mr. Fordham: Excellent. Capitalism in Marshall's point of view is tied directly with what type of government?

Student: Democracy.

Mr. Fordham: And democracies promote what?

Student: Freedom.

Mr. Fordham: Freedom. So that's kind of the point of view here. All right. And that's kind of the big foundation. In Europe, especially in France

and Italy, Communists were getting really popular in elections. People wanted kind of strong state-run solutions instead of allowing a free market to decide. And so, the point of view is only if you rebuild these countries so capitalism works again will they get their freedoms and then we don't have to fight wars with them like we did in World War II.

After this exchange, Mr. Fordham made use of specific points in the students' responses to draw connections to contemporary events. This was one of the steps that he was taking toward his vision of being a salon host where discussions could be more thematic and based on students' connections to history. For example, when the class discussed several potential audiences for the speech, Mr. Fordham led students to make the connection between the European Recovery Program and its legacy, the creation of the European Union. While Mr. Fordham controlled much of the direction of the discussion, he accepted and encouraged a variety of student responses particularly during a very quick discussion of *tone* at the end of the period. One student stated that the tone was "urgency," another student offered "unity" and a third said "sympathetic." Mr. Fordham affirmed students' answers adding brief historical context to further develop their statements. His acknowledgement of diverse answers was a result of his decision that it was more important for students to engage in interpretation and higher level thinking even if it was not necessarily a "correct" interpretation of history.

Mr. Fordham also incorporated short YouTube videos in place of the lectures that he used to deliver to his classes as another support for developing synthesis skills. During the lesson on Civil Rights philosophies, Mr. Fordham selected a video clip of Civil Rights activist Andrew Young discussing the legacy of the Civil Rights movement to

show to his classes. When asked about the purpose of selecting this specific video clip, Mr. Fordham shared the following intention:

It's honestly to help them write that assessment prompt, you know. So, I literally did like a video search this time with like "Civil Rights tactics," "Civil Rights legacy" and tried very much to keep it to those videos because I had other videos which was more of um, I felt more like primary sources where it was just news footage of the two men, and I really wanted to use that. But then I was like, that's not gonna help them to write the response or to get them thinking about it. So yeah, I picked the video I felt that could help them with either of those: tactics or legacy.

Mr. Fordham referred to the video as another layer to help activate students' "creative thinking" and "solidify" ideas. Mr. Fordham often spoke of his own "a-ha" moments or when something "clicked" for him, suggesting that he believed that repeated exposure to concepts could result in leaps in learning or "solidify[ing]" of understanding as he claimed was the case for his own development as a learner and writer.

Mr. Fordham had students "practice synthesis" as new sources were introduced during the lesson cycle. When I observed his on-grade level class during the Civil Rights lesson, Mr. Fordham asked students to read a short biographical section on Andrew Young in their textbooks before showing them the short video of Andrew Young talking about his experience as a leader during the Civil Rights Movement. In the clip, Andrew Young described his perspective on the misunderstandings of the two philosophies and shared his view on the legacy of the nonviolent philosophy. Although the video was not a primary source, the clip Mr. Fordham selected for students was not a summary or overview either. Instead, it offered Andrew Young's personal perspective on the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement in his own words. The video ended with the following argument:

We're all where we are because somebody else sacrificed. Somebody else paid a price, see, for your education, you know, grandmama's education, your mom's education. So, we are all building on the hard work and the sacrifice and sufferings of our forefathers and mothers. And so, if we're just going to take it for ourselves and we're going to evaluate how successful we are, by the kind of shoes we wear, we are in trouble.

After watching the video, Mr. Fordham prompted the class to talk to the person next to them to work on synthesis: "What information from the textbook, what information from the video can you use to answer the assessment prompt?" In the classroom, some students looked at the assessment prompt while other students began talking to each other. Students could be heard using the terms "nonviolent" and "Black Power." Some students were looking at their desks and not talking. After one minute, Mr. Fordham stopped the class to change his directions:

Mr. Fordham: Alright, why don't we stop? Alright, let's go over it as a class since there seems to be a lot of people who are not sure where to go with this. So, I want you to all look at the assessment prompt. Let's just break it down a little bit at a time. So, you need to decide on how the nonviolent and black power philosophy shaped tactics and legacy. Let's just stop there. What was the nonviolent philosophy?

Student: Not buying stuff, not buying products...

Mr. Fordham: Good. So instead of using violence, you use economic boycott. What also do you do?

Student: Sit...sit down.

Mr. Fordham: Say it again.

Student: sit ins.

Mr. Fordham: You do sit ins. And how is that nonviolent? What's the point of that?

Student: You are like more likely to make a point without causing trouble.

Mr. Fordham: All right, good. So, was the purpose of non-violence to avoid violence?

Student: No.

Mr. Fordham: What's the purpose of nonviolence then?

Student: To show them their cruelty.

Mr. Fordham: To show the cruelty, to have the violence done against you. So that's a big part of this philosophy of nonviolence that if you do it this way, can they deny you your dignity?

Students: No.

Mr. Fordham: No. Do you make the people who are committing the violent acts to look really bad?

Students: Yes.

Mr. Fordham went on to establish the Black Power philosophy and then moved into asking students about the tactics used by both groups. At one point, he prompted a student to “just break it down into the facts” and asked students to explain how the information they were sharing would be “useful” in responding to their assessment prompt. The competing demands that Mr. Fordham felt between delivering his content while simultaneously wanting to turn more control over the learning of the content to students were evident in this exchange. Mr. Fordham’s vision was that students would be prepared to bring forward ideas on their own and capable of synthesizing information from the textbook and the video; however, Mr. Fordham was also focused on making sure students learned the content which resulted in him checking understanding and asking students to bring forward the facts throughout this discussion.

As the discussion of the philosophies came to a close, Mr. Fordham asked students which philosophy Andrew Young believed had the most powerful legacy. He followed that question with the question that provided the bridge between checking students’ understanding of the philosophies to his own vision for students’ to engage in making personal connections and synthesis: “Which do *you* think had the more powerful legacy?” Students asserted Martin Luther King Jr.’s philosophy and supported their position by sharing that people talk about Martin Luther King Jr. more than Malcolm X and that Martin Luther King Jr. had his own holiday and a statue in Washington D.C. Mr. Fordham went on to challenge students to consider the broader question of what might have influenced how the nonviolent philosophy was perceived in society at large as

having a better legacy. He provided a hint with his follow-up question about what percentage of the U.S. population is African American to which students responded, “Thirteen percent.” Mr. Fordham then questioned the class, “So, couldn’t there be an argument made that the other legacy, the Black Power legacy, is also important?” Students responded to the affirmative. Mr. Fordham then asked the class to “keep an open mind for that” as they prepared to read excerpts from Malcolm X’s speech “The Ballot or the Bullet.”

Mr. Fordham shared how in the past he would have allowed the discussion to end with students’ claiming that Martin Luther King Jr. had the more influential legacy; however, he wanted his students to exhibit a deeper understanding of the legacy of Civil Rights as they examined it through the lens of making an argument. He explained what he was thinking during that classroom event:

Let’s figure out what a good interpretation or good argument has been, so that’s something I would say that asking kids those questions, to think deeper, you know, you might just say it’s Dr. King’s point of view is the main view, but what could be another interpretation?

During these discussions, Mr. Fordham also raised broader American History themes that connected the Civil Rights era to other historical events including the Black Nationalism Movement which was representative of the transition he was making in his teaching to focusing more on thematic ties across history. To Mr. Fordham’s delight, students in both Honors class and his on-grade level class were able to recall Marcus Garvey who was the leader of the Black Nationalism Movement, and with Mr. Fordham’s guidance, make connections across eras between the philosophies of Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X. Mr. Fordham explained that his intention for raising that

comparison was to model how to make connections to past as well as contemporary events in order to get his students thinking about history differently. He explained:

There's no absolute truth. It's continual... developmentally they may not fully be there yet, but to kind of give them language or model ways to see these trends I think is, it's always kind of on the back burner of my mind whenever I'm teaching. Like I, I want you to be able to reflect on these things and see how like the trends relate over time and how they, you know, history doesn't repeat itself. There's these universal trends, you know, and you can see them played out over and over again, you know, so I don't know, you understand something more about humanity.

In this rationale for his approach, Mr. Fordham was thinking through the developmental considerations of how to model the higher-level thinking skills that he was not convinced students were fully able to access. Within this example, Mr. Fordham was bringing forward two facets of his vision and considering how they could work together. One facet was his focus on the critical thinking skills of the CCSS which he wanted students to develop in service of understanding “universal trends” and “humanity.” Bringing these two facets together demonstrated how Mr. Fordham was enacting his vision for students’ citizenship development.

Although Mr. Fordham perceived that his process of layering sources to build synthesis during the steps in his lesson cycle was an effective method for accomplishing his vision for training students to become better thinkers and better prepared to make a historical argument, he questioned to what degree students were truly engaging in the higher-level synthesizing of information across sources as he had envisioned. This was a question that he continued to consider, reflect upon, and return to during our post-observation interviews. Even after months of training in the process, Mr. Fordham acknowledged that although many students showed growth, there were some students who still struggled to keep up with the steps, particularly in his on-grade level classes,

and some in his Honors classes who seemed disengaged with the process. Because of his vision-forward stance, Mr. Fordham remained focused on his vision despite recognizing some of his students' learning challenges. He believed that the continued practice was what students needed to become successful, and this belief remained unchanged. He stated that at the end of those lessons around the two philosophies of the Civil Rights movement, he felt that his students were prepared and had the tools they needed for an "honest assessment of what we're actually doing" in class.

Argument writing training. Having laid the foundations with analysis of primary and secondary sources and practicing synthesis of these sources in class, Mr. Fordham gauged when students were ready for the final step in his cycle: the writing assessment. Toward the top of Mr. Fordham's pyramid, he envisioned students ready to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating an original product: "paragraph prompt, persuasive essay, class debate, brochure, presentation, etc." However, Mr. Fordham had decided early in the year to focus on the five-paragraph essay. Consistent with his technical perspective, Mr. Fordham developed a set of tools to aid students' success with scaffolding students to be able to execute the required structure. He employed the same thesis development organizer, essay organizer, and rubrics to structure a linear set of steps in the writing process and which he used with every writing assignment.

Mr. Fordham's intention for developing these tools was to be as explicit as possible; his aim was to break down specific writing components with a focus on the structure that he was looking for in the final draft of students' formal writing. He stated that he wanted his rubrics to serve as "another dialogue" in addition to his own verbal

feedback for students to use to improve their writing. He also aimed to be consistent and transparent about his grading. The criteria for an effective thesis statement that Mr. Fordham included in his mini thesis statement rubric, for example, was copied directly from the requirements for the Introductory Paragraph category in his Persuasive Essay Rubric. He further explained his intention to match requirements for the assignment as he had presented them in the outline format he provided students:

[It] is pretty much breaking down their outline like I'm looking for this (points to categories). You can either do it this well (4-Above Standards), not so well (3-Meets Standards), really poorly (2-Approaching Standards), or you didn't do it (1-Below Standards). And these are the points that you get, (pointing to the scale), so to especially help the kids point by point.

Mr. Fordham's shared that he had used rubrics in the past but explained that his focus had changed over the years focus on content and clarity. Mr. Fordham's rubric included eight categories: Introductory Paragraph, Supporting Paragraph 1, Supporting Paragraph 2, Supporting Paragraph 3, Closing Paragraph, Audience, Sentence Structure, and Grammar and Spelling. These choices were consistent with his perspective that students benefitted from explicit structures for organizing their writing. Mr. Fordham's rubric also demonstrated the importance he placed on content and clarity through his repetitive use of the terms "clearly, fully and convincingly" to describe the highest level of achievement on the writing task. At the bottom of the four-page rubric, Mr. Fordham included the following explanation for students (Figure 4):

WHAT DOES CLEARLY, FULLY AND CONVINCINGLY MEAN?

CLEARLY = someone who is not in your head can read what you wrote and understand it. If you do not edit your work you will not "clearly" communicate ideas through your writing to an audience.

FULLY = think of your writing as a flood wall. If you built a flood wall without mortar to connect all the blocks a flood would destroy it. If you built all of your

wall but left one block out water would still get through. Your writing must address possible questions that your audience may have. Only by anticipating your audience's questions can you "fully" communicate your thoughts through writing.

CONVINCINGLY = your writing is persuasive. You use common sense and logic to make the most appropriate arguments based on the facts. Not all arguments are equal – try to construct the one argument that cannot be disproven based on the facts. Convince yourself that your argument is the only reasonable one to be made and then you will be able to write "convincingly" to your audience.

Figure 4: Mr. Fordham's Explanation of Clearly, Fully, and Convincingly

The phrase *clearly, fully, and convincingly* was what Mr. Fordham stated he always used when providing feedback to students about their writing and which was the focus of his discussion with student groups about their thesis statements. In looking down the Above Standards column, the highest level of achievement on his essay rubric, the phrase *clearly, fully, and convincingly* was used to describe an array of specific criteria for effective paragraphs. In all, the expression *clearly, fully, and convincingly* was used 19 times to describe writing that met the Above Standard level on the rubric. Mr. Fordham used the descriptor *clearly, fully, and convincingly* and similar criteria and scoring tiers for other assignment rubrics including his Cornell Notes rubric, his SOAPS-tone rubric as well as his thesis statement rubric.

In addition to the focus on clarity of content, Mr. Fordham's rubrics made frequent reference to writing "with an audience in mind" as a necessary element of being convincing. When asked how someone coming into his room would know that writing for an audience was an important aspect of his vision for student writing, he pointed out how the tools he had developed emphasized logical appeals:

Well, when they write argumentative essays, a big chunk of my rubric is specifically about the audience. If you don't, the highest grade you can get is an 80 out of a 100. I think, like up here I have the whole rhetorical forms of argument (pointing at the white board behind his desk) and making sure they can't

use pathos or ethos in here (points to rubric), only logos, and always framing that in terms of your audience.

Mr. Fordham's rubric was another indicator of his technical perspective and was apparent in his enactment of his vision through the development of his own specific tools. In a technical perspective, the aim of writing is for communication of a textual message to a broad audience. Mr. Fordham's emphasis on structure, reasoning and clarity were consistent with this emphasis.

Mr. Fordham's intention for using rubrics was one aspect of how he had envisioned changing his practice that he felt was in opposition to the approach that had been presented during the BWP Institute. He explained how he struggled against the idea for student-made rubrics put forth during the BWP Institute and how he came to solidify his stance on his own purpose for using rubrics in his class:

And then, the one thing that course always kept saying and I think it helped me, to have the kids create the rubrics. And I kept going back on that, and it was one of those things where I kept pushing against that and justifying why I was pushing against it, and the idea is that I am using these rubrics as very specific teaching tools. So, I don't want the kids to make them. It's this is specifically what I am teaching you. So, I want you to know, in all fairness, this is exactly what you are getting your grade on and figuring all of that out.

In this explanation, Mr. Fordham shared an example of how engaging in the BWP professional learning community where there was collegial discussion about the purposes of using specific writing tools helped Mr. Fordham to clarify his own purpose for developing his rubrics.

During our second post-observation interview, I asked Mr. Fordham if he would share examples of student writing that he was grading and walk through his process for evaluating student work using his rubric. Explaining that he used the same rubric for both

on-grade level and Honors classes, Mr. Fordham stated that students could still “do it right, but if it’s not clear, full, and convincing, you don’t get the full points... My [on grade level] kids, most of them don’t ever hit on it, but they get like an 80% instead of 100%, so it’s like kind of working out that system took me a while, but I think I have.”

This example illustrated how Mr. Fordham had come to terms with using the same readings, procedures, and rubrics with all of his students. Mr. Fordham noted broad inequities in his school and in society that were important to him, yet he rejected differentiation on principle because not holding students to high standards would not help them to surmount these inequities. He believed that his on-grade level students were just as smart as his Honors students, but that they were lacking preparation. Many of his on-grade level students received lower scores on his rubric when they did not meet the same bar as the students in his Honors classes. While students could rewrite assignments and meet with Mr. Fordham after school for extra help, he remarked that his on-grade level students rarely did.

The examples that Mr. Fordham reviewed with me were from group essays on causes of the Great Depression. In looking at one group’s assessment and rubric, he explained his evaluation:

[This group] got an 86 and you could see like they lost points because their thesis wasn't fully developed. And then, um, when I look at other things, I took points off of a lot of times it came, their warrants weren't good, so I have kids now who cite the information and provide the evidence and each body paragraph has three pieces of evidence. They now do that, no problem. It's explaining how the evidence proves the topic sentence. I don't understand why it's hard, sometimes as an adult, but then I remember it wasn't until college that I figured out how to do that.

Mr. Fordham concluded that this group of students demonstrated that they had accomplished the broad goals of his training. He stated:

....the kids realize a lot of this is just about reproducing what they researched in a way that someone else could read it. So, they did good. There might be little things like they didn't have a transition sentence and that was one of the structure things I want them to have.

He remarked that his students had been through the process so many times that he no longer had to write a lot of comments "but I still feel I'm communicating to them" through the rubric. When he returned the essay to the group mentioned above that received an 86, Mr. Fordham remarked on a comment from one of the students in the group, "I even heard him say, 'I can't believe we forgot the transition sentence.' Just like that, he knew what I wanted and how I wanted it." Aligned with his vision for his rubric as a "dialogue" and a teaching tool, Mr. Fordham's rubric was transparent and included specific guidelines that students could follow to achieve the structured response Mr. Fordham was looking for, as the students that received the 86 were able to see that they had forgotten their transition sentence. Consistent with Mr. Fordham's emphasis on structure, these tools guided students toward specific quantitative criteria such as 3 details; however, how these tools guided students toward exemplars of what "good writing" looked like in an effective argument was not an articulated goal.

Mr. Fordham reported receiving "push back" from some parents and students regarding his insistence on using the prescribed format. He shared that he had recently received an email from a parent of one of his students expressing her concerns with a link to an article about "saying teaching kids how to write a structure is wrong" that upset him. He remained undeterred, however, arguing that students needed to learn the

structure first before they could develop their own approach. He reported telling his students:

[F]irst before you break the rules, you have to learn what the rules are, and you're ninth graders. So how about I really make sure you have this so when you go on 10th, 11th and 12th grade, you can start developing your own style once you mastered kind of the way of doing it.

He further argued that that mastery of the structure was a step on this path to developing their own style; "...until then, you know, follow the structure so it kind of gets ingrained in you," he explained.

Although Mr. Fordham was not always excited to read what his students produced, he acknowledged that many of them had achieved the goal of his training and that he was finally assessing students on what they were actually learning in class. He explained:

I was realizing that the fourth quarter, I was [grading] a lot faster just to kind of hit on more things and I kinda, I didn't stop reading their assessment prompt answers, but I did start scanning through because it was almost like, okay, you cited your source. Okay, you have the evidence. Okay, and like without realizing, I was getting bored and really frustrated, like they are all writing the same. I was like 'I got this again?' And then I realized it was, oh, well, from the beginning of the year they really do know how to structure this, you know. I don't feel the synthesis part they have nailed down yet, but I don't think that's something as ninth graders they would. And I think for me, grading, sometimes, is difficult for that because part of me is like, nope, there's no synthesis here, but then a part of me is like, you really are showing the structure that will eventually lead to that.

Mr. Fordham's vision of how training students to replicate a structure would ultimately lead students to synthesize information was evident in this description. Mr. Fordham prioritized structure over other aspects of writing and remarked that students in his classes could achieve an 8 or 9 level out of 10 on his rubric without actually writing a convincing argument if they were able to demonstrate the proper form and structure.

Although he did not see the synthesis he had hoped to see in many students' responses, he was satisfied with a partial attainment of seeing the structure that he believed would eventually lead to higher level thinking. The design of Mr. Fordham's rubric rewarded students for achieving this goal and was consistent with the research findings that teachers' writing rubrics are often tailored in ways that generate formulaic responses, which is what happened for many of Mr. Fordham's students as they "learned" the rubric over the course of the year (Applebee & Langer, 2011). Because of his vision-forward stance, Mr. Fordham was the only teacher in the study who specifically referenced how he wanted students to be able to use the feedback provided on the rubrics for their writing growth.

Gatekeeping: Enacting the Teacher's Role

As Mr. Fordham worked on adjusting his role in the classroom to enact his vision, he took steps to reconsider his approach for interacting with his students to play more of a facilitative role rather than an authoritative one. However, he still felt that he needed to regulate the steps in the learning process. He explained:

Like, and it's like what everyone says, instead of being in front of the class, it's about a lot of noise and things like that. I very much am like that, so I might now take a day where I might explain a big project, but that's it. And the rest of the time, it's them working on it, and it's me saying, 'This step, this step.'

In order to usher students through the steps of the writing process in a facilitative manner, Mr. Fordham restructured his approach by providing formative feedback to students during the early stages of the writing process. He explained that he modified how he provided writing guidance so that students would receive actionable feedback rather than only in the form of summative feedback when they received the grade on their final paper. In the past, he explained his approach was "I'll see it when I read your paper if you

actually got this or not.” He stated that in the past, he would walk around, field questions, and attempt to ask students questions “which I always felt was kind of sporadic and I never know what to ask,” he explained. When looking at students’ thesis statements, “usually, I would just say, let me see what your thesis is. And I’m like, ‘yeah, you got to rework it.’ And not being able to have those tools to say, let’s discuss what you wrote. It’s that discussing of the writing that I’m doing a lot more of.”

Instead of his former practice of walking around to glance at thesis statements, Mr. Fordham was much more intentional. He reviewed and graded thesis statements using one of the task-specific rubrics he had developed for evaluating steps in the research and writing process.

Mr. Fordham then used the thesis rubric as a tool for leading discussions with student groups about their next steps. He further stated his plan to use these formative feedback conferences to communicate to his students “what warrants do or what analysis is.” He credited the BWP Program for instilling in him that purpose. “That was huge from the course,” he claimed.

Mr. Fordham approached his role during these conferences in line with how he envisioned his role as the gatekeeper. In our pre-observation interview for his lesson on the Great Depression, he walked through how he had graded different groups’ thesis statements and explained his intention for how he would redirect groups to return to earlier steps in the cycle to refine their reasoning before moving into planning their written response using the outline organizer. Mr. Fordham shared an example of how he envisioned instructing a particular group of students to demonstrate the structured approach he wanted to employ with students using the language from the rubric:

(Pointing to the thesis statement) 'It's not clear. The reason that it's not clear is that you didn't fully develop and that's why it's not convincing.' So then, that's where we start, Let's now talk this through. So, if you are saying that the causes of the Great Depression are a false sense of security due to a false sense of prosperity. That's a good start. How does this cause the Great Depression? That's what you have to tell me. So, then see if they can put it together on their own. If they can't, well, what were your pieces of evidence?

Mr. Fordham stated that his intention during these conferences was to help students articulate their reasoning and clarify how their evidence supported their claims. He remarked that "they chose this [evidence] for this reason, and then maybe sometimes just speaking with me helps them to figure out how, because a lot of the times I notice, kids know exactly what they are doing. They don't have the ability to express it in words. And it's frustrating [for them]."

On the day that I observed Mr. Fordham's Honors class receiving feedback on their thesis statements, the students were working on developing three claims that persuasively proved the causes of the Great Depression. During the small group conferences, Mr. Fordham remained seated at the conference table with his attention directed at the students he was meeting with. From my vantage point at the front of the classroom, during conferences, students nodded and appeared to be listening to his feedback but made few comments except for one group which Mr. Fordham engaged in discussion about strengthening one of their claims. Most groups received partial credit for their thesis statement because their statement was lacking effective warrants. In his meeting with the group he had used as an example for how he intended to use common language, Mr. Fordham shared the following feedback with the group:

Alright, I'm going to go quick. If you guys have questions, ask them, but let's start with the rubric. You are not at 'clearly and fully,' so it's hard for this to be convincing. You have your three arguments. You have your evidence. You need

your citations. If you did it here, you know what you're writing when you are doing the paper. What I want you guys to know, and I'll just look at the first one. "The causes of the Great Depression were a false sense of security due to a false sense of prosperity." Does that by itself answer the question of what caused the Great Depression? (Students shake their heads). So, look at it. Does that tell you how this false sense of security caused the Great Depression? (Students shake their heads). So that's what I want to see more when you look at your three pieces of evidence. How does this cause the Great Depression because that then is your argument. So, if you can think of it in that way, you should be able to do the same thing, here and here.

Other groups received similar feedback about their warrants. Mr. Fordham suggested to some groups that they go back into the textbook to understand the concepts more fully. He instructed one group to "write down vocabulary words for the warrants and then relook at them and then say what is actually the argument of how this thing caused the Great Depression?" The only group that received full credit for their thesis statement used the word "caused" in their statement.

In keeping with his role as the gate keeper, Mr. Fordham set the pace and regulated the steps that students took during the early stages of the writing process rather than allowing students to manage their own pace which seemed in conflict with his vision for flow but was consistent with his vision for his own role moving students through the tasks; some students, particularly in his on-grade level class, struggled to keep up with the steps as a result.

In addition to making recommendations about next steps to groups that were lacking warrants, Mr. Fordham spoke to three different groups about their use of the concept of "buying on margin" as one of the causes of the Great Depression. After assessing whether or not students understood the concept of buying on margin, Mr. Fordham told three groups the same story about a speculative tulip market in the

Neverlands to illustrate the concept before sending them to work on their outlines. He also gave three student groups a hint when one of the causes they had selected was “not convincing” or their statement was incomplete. To one group, he asked, “What percentage of Americans had a lot of money? What percentage had little money? Is there an unequal distribution of wealth? Could you see maybe an argument forming through that?” To another group, he stated, “I don’t want to give you this term, but is there an uneven distribution of wealth?” To a third group, he said, “I’m going to give you another one: unequal distribution of wealth” before instructing them to go back and further their research.

Reflecting on this exchange during a post-observation interview, Mr. Fordham acknowledge that he could have “play[ed] this game where, “Could you guys think of another phrase” but felt that it was unlikely that students would come up with the language that would help them to better express their thinking. He gave students the term *uneven distribution of wealth* for that reason. “They were right on the goal line,” he said. When asked for elaboration, he responded:

I find with the ninth graders, a lot of them, they understand everything. It's all jumbled in their head. It's like I always go with this idea, like, ‘you know everything, but it's in your head like a washing machine. You need to present it to an audience where it's like folded, cleaned, and put in a closet, you know, an organized space.’ And I think just having that kind of phrase would help them get it out of the wash into the closet.

In this exchange, Mr. Fordham expressed one of his core beliefs about students’ writing challenges that was consistent with his technical perspective of writing development. Mr. Fordham frequently referred to students’ ideas as “stuck in their heads.” His approach of providing students with structure and vocabulary terms that

would help them present their ideas in an organized way and move forward was consistent with his envisioned role as the gatekeeper who would move students along through their writing tasks.

Although Mr. Fordham believed that the actual drafting and finalizing of writing were the easiest steps in the writing process, he found that independent writing was particularly challenging for his on-grade level students and his less motivated Honors students who often required additional help breaking down tasks into smaller steps. Mr. Fordham reported that during conferences he differentiated next steps depending upon the group. This differentiation was enacted with one of the groups in his Honors class that turned in an incomplete thesis statement. Students in this group sat and listened to Mr. Fordham review their assignment without making comments during their conference. Mr. Fordham shared a model of another group's thesis statement, but also instructed the group about their next steps, "You have to read the sources and understand them." He continued by offering the group three warrants that they could use for their thesis "to make your lives a little easier" before giving them another packet of sources and instructing them to go back and do their research: "You are not in a position to go on and do your outline," he stated. After one of the students stated that she was going to do the essay on her own, which students could choose to do, Mr. Fordham stated to the rest of the group, "You guys need to do more. You have to put in more effort." Some of the students in this group failed to submit their final essay.

Although he wanted to engage in dialogue about student writing, Mr. Fordham's students listened to his feedback without speaking or asking questions. In reviewing the discussions he had with student groups about their writing, Mr. Fordham reflected on the

lack of “give and take” that he wanted between him and student groups at which time he reiterated his vision for the classroom environment to be like a salon:

...where we're all getting together and we're just kind of talking about these ideas and we're all well versed in them, and instead it was more of the teacher just saying, ‘You're on the right track but you need to think about this and this and do you - I see you have this idea, how are you going to use it?’ And then alright, let me help you understand it a little bit more and *that* I didn't necessarily want it to be like.

While Mr. Fordham recognized the imbalance between roles in this exchange, he was not able to pinpoint precisely what was missing. He stated:

...it felt more like it was more of a direct teaching just in a small group which will have its value, but I don't know I had this idea that it would be the kids talking more and it just wasn't, and I think that that was difficult like, and I don't know what to take from that. Does that mean the kids don't understand the sources as well? Does that mean that they're just, we're going to do it the way we're going to do it, and we'll just listen to you and then we'll go off and just still, you know, it was hard to gauge that sometimes with the groups or I think maybe some of them, the expectation was we just listen to you then.

Mr. Fordham's approach in his interaction with the groups about their thesis statements, although not his specific intention, was cohesive with his broader vision for his role as a gatekeeper providing students with the next steps as part of a specific training process that would build to the formation of an argumentative essay. Although he had developed new beliefs about the importance exchanging ideas, the rubric he designed and the specific feedback he provided on what was missing in students' work prioritized moving students to the next gate over idea generation. Mr. Fordham made progress toward embracing the role of the gatekeeper but remarked that “the flash is gone.” He confessed that he felt teachers are supposed to say that they like giving students more independence with their learning; however, he lamented, “I miss telling the story because

when I told them the story, I knew they knew it all. They may have only remembered or retained 20% but I knew it was all out there.” However, he concluded “I feel like the flashy, oh my God, this is the fun, cool stuff – that’s gone, and in the place is the boring stuff, but I think that’s why I did better this year than any other year. I feel like I really worked on the boring stuff.”

Developing a Kind of Common Citizen: Enacting Learning for the 21st Century

Training students to be critical thinkers and writers was strongly related to Mr. Fordham’s broad vision for preparing students for 21st Century society. Enacting this vision caused Mr. Fordham a moral struggle as he tried to reconcile his multiple intentions and concerns for student learning. On the one hand, he felt that students needed to be well-versed in history to be productive citizens in a democracy; however, he also felt that just knowing historical content was “not really what’s important to these kids” or what they needed to learn to be prepared for their futures. He also was troubled by the broader implications of having focused so much during the year on argumentative writing over content:

There is a certain amount of nationalism, patriotism, shared language and history we need, you know, and when we start going down the path I'm going where, well, it's more about learning how to think and it's more, that's great if we got those basic stories done in elementary school, but now we don't get them done in elementary school because the kids have to test.

Mr. Fordham worried about the stories that kids were not learning which provoked his fears for their futures as well as the future of society. He had recently read in the newspaper “how many teachers aren’t teaching the kids what Auschwitz is,” for example, which was very disturbing to him. He admitted that he himself had skipped important content during the year including the New Deal because of his decision to be “skill-

based.” He didn’t deliver his usual lecture on the Holocaust because of his shift to using primary source documents for content delivery, and he was concerned about the repercussions of his decisions. Although he struggled with the notion that our “shared history isn’t being shared,” Mr. Fordham simultaneously held the position that “there’s just so much history that no one will ever learn about, so much stuff, that content shouldn’t be the driver.” Mr. Fordham’s struggle to balance content and skill development were especially concerning to him and represented “conflicting pedagogical goals and concerns” that came up as unresolved tensions that he returned to frequently (Zimmerman, 2017, p. 356).

Mr. Fordham decided to address this dilemma by assigning students a video essay for their midterm exam out of his “concern with being so much about argumentative [writing]” during the year. The video essay was a new assignment that he conceived of as the original focus of his inquiry during the BWP Summer Institute that required students to look across three themes of U.S. History taken from the Advanced Placement U.S. History curriculum to create a video about what type of citizen they wanted to be when they grew up. The prompt that Mr. Fordham provided for the assignment was: “Based on my study of US History I want to be the type of American citizen that...(3 sub-arguments).” Mr. Fordham reported that this assignment was also meant to “refresh [his] love of history and country and [see] what kids think it means to be an American.” Of the themes students selected for their analysis, Mr. Fordham reported that “a big one for them was economic transformation.” He attributed students’ choice to the emphasis he had placed on the significance of the Industrial Revolution to students’ futures. He shared:

I look at the Industrial Revolution, I look at the rise of big business, I look at the rise of unions, I look at how things changed so drastically due to technology.

Here's the evidence to prove that these things actually happen, that's going to impact the citizen I'm going to be because I know I need to get college education now because that's, the changes, those are the only jobs available, you know. So, in a way I kind of feel that's why I did the video essay the way I did with that idea of my goal is we should be a kind of common citizen.

The results of the video project, in effect, further confirmed Mr. Fordham's decision to focus on developing critical thinking skills during the remainder of the year. In reflecting on the experience, he felt that it was challenging for him to gauge students' readiness and skill level ahead of time and that he hadn't considered how difficult it would be for students to communicate their ideas in the video genre or how much trouble they would encounter with using technology. He reported that students were uncomfortable because they didn't want to be on video and "the technology scared them. They felt overwhelmed." He also believed that his students' challenges were representative of educational inequity and an indicator of the gap between the skills that students should have already developed and where students were when it came to their technology skills. He speculated that students from more privileged backgrounds might not have encountered the same technical frustrations. He concluded that many of his students did not have the foundational skills necessary for the project and therefore "hit a wall." He argued, however, that the experience challenged students in ways that were headed in "the right direction" even though many of the final products demonstrated questionable interpretations of history. He explained,

...there was things they said like, yeah, that's not really a proper kind of analysis of the history. But, you know, again, based on the, I was stressing this skill over getting it right, you know? Um, 'you hit it.' So, there's a lot of kids that got like high nineties and hundreds who, it's kind of like, I just don't buy your argument at all, and I don't think you fully got the content, but you're demonstrating now that ability to think, and if you had time to sit down with someone and discuss it using the skills of making an argument and then having to either defend it or change

what you're defending based on feedback, yeah, I think you'd, you'd really learn the subject better.

Mr. Fordham's decision to focus on students demonstrating the ability to think over demonstrating their knowledge of the content or demonstrating higher level analysis skills was an example of how he had prioritized a long view of skill building over content. He described how he was willing to reward students with a high grade for "hitting" the skill even though their analysis was not what he considered to be accurate.

Mr. Fordham reported other lapses in higher level thinking during the year that concerned him and that caused him to redouble his efforts to engage students critically, particularly when he asked students to make connections to contemporary events and issues. He described during our final interview "going off" that day on his classes during their lesson on Nixon and the Watergate hearings while they were engaged in discussing the parallels between the Watergate scandal and the Russian campaign to influence the 2016 election. He relayed how he chided his students:

Like how many of you, someone sends you an article, you just read it and you don't question, is this a good source or put it into context of how it relates to other things? How many of you, when you want an answer or something, you just Google it and whatever the first site is, you just go to that, you know, um, and saying, you know, like our democracy isn't going to flourish or survive if we don't get better at this. This type of training you don't really master until college.

In this exchange, Mr. Fordham shared with his students his deepest fears for their futures driven by his belief that students were likely to take the "path of least resistance" instead of persisting through the training needed to develop the critical thinking skills that he believed were needed for a functioning democracy. The assumption that students would "Google it" rather than delving deeper was one that Mr. Fordham applied broadly

and was also a belief that interfered with making his vision to extend students more responsibility for making choices about their learning actionable as he feared that they would be unprepared for taking on that responsibility.

This experience with the video essay offered a significant learning opportunity for Mr. Fordham as he grappled with how he was going to respond to students' challenges and what he was going to take away from students' experiences. Even though it was challenging for his students and for him, Mr. Fordham created another opportunity for students to wrestle with these concepts at the end of the school year. Although he decided to drop requiring a second video for the final exam as he had originally planned, Mr. Fordham's Honors students were required to create a script and his on-grade level students created the thesis statement to again answer the question about what kind of American citizen they wanted to be, another example of Mr. Fordham's belief in the benefits of repeated practice. He admitted that in the past when he used to focus on lecturing and assessing students on a multiple-choice exam, "I didn't have all these like, well are they really prepared or not prepared? Can they handle the rigor? You know, I didn't have to worry about that nearly as much." He concluded:

And I think that was illuminating...And I think I thought I was always a good teacher and then it was like, I think this year especially was like, I wonder if I was really preparing kids, you know, like maybe little things here and there. But was I really preparing them for like a career or college and having that skill set? And you know, I think that's the, what the tradeoff is you were asking. I think giving up what I was passionate about was the tradeoff. But the pay is I think I am preparing them more, they may not be as happy, but I do think I'm preparing them and then it's just the hope that someone next year continues.

This concern over the legacy of his efforts and long-term impact on students' preparation for life beyond the classroom was one that Mr. Fordham returned to on several occasions

and that gave him pause. With his orientation as vision-forward, Mr. Fordham was concerned explicitly with how he could see the impact of his specific approach as valuable for preparing students for his distant vision of college and career readiness. Mr. Fordham wanted to have tangible evidence of students' growth over time so that he knew that his efforts were working. However, there was no method in his school for tracking students beyond the frequent discussions of current testing data trends which were not focused on individual students or students' performance over time. Therefore, Mr. Fordham did not find these discussions useful for his purposes. Mr. Fordham wanted his own method of measuring his progress as a teacher but struggled to accurately assess how students were developing toward his broad goals for them to be "prepared" for the 21st Century. He said, "*I feel* they're better at reading and writing, but at that same time, they're not tested in a way where I would really *know* long term if this is benefiting them or not" (emphasis added). In this sense, enacting his vision of students' being prepared for the 21st Century was challenging. This struggle led him to re-envision how he might effectively gauge students' growth himself, and as an outcome of that re-envisioning, he decided he would develop a portfolio method of assessment for the following school year.

Searching for Flow: Enacting Student Learning

As Mr. Fordham shifted more of the responsibility for learning to his students over the course of the year, he expected that it would become easier for students to take ownership because they were not "reinventing the wheel." His theory was that familiarity would allow students to engage more intentionally with the content as students brought more of their own thinking and connections to the classroom community. These

expectations were based on Mr. Fordham's vision of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1991) flow theory which he believed would be facilitated by his structured approach and repetitive practice. He envisioned students entering a concentrated state of focus and comfort which would aid their learning and participation in the classroom discussion.

Halting discussions. As has been discussed previously, Mr. Fordham was particularly invested in class discussion as a method for activating and assessing students' developing synthesis and argumentative skills formatively. He hoped for "lively conversation" to develop during classes around topics that students initiated, "but it really depends on how much the kids put in at this point," he stated. Mr. Fordham's vision was that students would be so engrossed in the discussion that he would have to interrupt them to move on the next question and that there would be so many comments that "maybe we don't even get through SOAPSTone fully because they were getting into something." However, practically speaking, Mr. Fordham also noted that in the past, topics he thought students would find "super interesting" had not always provoked students to reach beyond offering straightforward answers using the SOAPSTone framework of text analysis. He confessed:

I'm trying to guard my expectations because I'm thinking this is going to be phenomenal, and then it's just kind of well, you answered the questions. All right, good for you, you know, and that's still good, just not quite what I want.

During a pre-observation interview when asked what he anticipated would happen during a planned class discussion with his "quietest Honors class," Mr. Fordham made reference to gauging the class and adjusting his response to students as needed with the goal of "getting a kid interested enough where they want to participate." In his on-grade level classes, he encountered different challenges with class discussion. He anticipated that his

students would be more willing to share than his Honors classes, but often students' ideas were unformed or lacking substantive support from the sources. He described the discussions he expected in one of those classes as "an interesting dynamic where it's not like this nice flowing conversation. It's going to be very halting, stop, halting, stop, halting, I feel." Given that his purpose was for students to engage in synthesis and get into a discussion flow, Mr. Fordham's intention with the on-grade level class was to model and provide scaffolding for students to help shape their ideas into more coherent points. He related the challenge:

It's going to be a lot of ideas might be out there, but then how do you get them where they're expressing it? Not just their opinion but what was in the sources that they were reading or watching. And I think that for them is always the hard part.

Mr. Fordham stated that he did not spend time developing questions for discussion but instead used more intuitive methods of activating or redirecting class discussion as needed. However, he noted that using the SOAPSTone strategy had helped to keep discussions more focused.

He reported that he had worked during the year on employing more wait time and also using turn-and-talk as two strategies to allow students to activate the precise language and make connections between their ideas before sharing with the class. His intention was also to "cool down the jets" of students who tended to throw out every idea that they could think of. He hoped that talking to a partner provided these students with an opportunity to sort out the facts which would contribute to their ability to develop synthesis. Simultaneously, Mr. Fordham wanted to give other students who needed more

processing time “just that little extra time to have something really insightful” to contribute to the discussion.

It was evident that Mr. Fordham counted on individual students to make contributions in distinctive ways to a discussion that he hoped would evolve into an exchange of ideas. For example, he described a student in one of his one grade level classes whom he relied on for having strong opinions:

He will jump very arrogantly with ‘I have the right answer,’ and it's always a really good idea, but he always makes it a point of doing the least amount of work as possible. So, it, it's sometimes like I'm saying, ‘That's really good. What about this?’ And him just looking at me like, ‘yeah, no, I didn't really do the reading. I'm not doing the reading. I'm just, this is what I think, my opinion, you know, has this weight.’ So, he's a good kid for these class discussions for that reason, you know, because if nothing else, he'll get at least the ball rolling, and I think that's really good.

Mr. Fordham acknowledged that by the end of the year, his Honors students seemed to be growing bored with the system. He related how he addressed this issue directly with his classes:

I actually talked to all the classes and said, “This is why we're doing this. It should feel a little easier, a little less strenuous. It may even be a little bit more boring, but it's when we get into the SOAPSTone and the synthesis, that's where you guys hopefully have now knowledge to really engage more in conversations,” so to kind of try to encourage that.

Mr. Fordham viewed students’ boredom as a sign that students were actually capable of transcending the routine of SOAPSTone to reach that level of “lively conversation” that he envisioned as a state of flow. While he saw glimmers of this type of engagement, he was not able to predict exactly what topics or methods facilitated this level of discourse. He stated, “I'm always surprised sometimes how out of the loop they are” with current events. He believed this detachment was another consequence of students being overwhelmed due to information overload. Mr. Fordham concluded that not having a

common frame of reference made it challenging to get into discussions of historical themes. He observed, “It’s hard to appreciate history when you feel like there’s never been a time like this.”

Group writing conferences. During the writing process, in particular, Mr. Fordham was conscious of wanting students to be able to take responsibility over their writing process and hopefully find a way to get into flow. The organizer and other tools he created were designed to facilitate a level of competence for this purpose. During the lesson on thesis statements for group essays on the causes of the Great Depression, Mr. Fordham reinforced with students his belief that they were equipped to jump into the organization of their ideas because they had internalized the essay structure and process for transitioning from their outline to their draft:

You know your topic sentence what it is from your thesis. You know the citation from your source and the quote from your source because you already wrote it down, so just like last time, you know to leave that blank because you just go to your previous chart. And then where it says explain the start of a trend, that's your warrant. Remember your warrant explains how your evidence proves your argument. So, it's kind of like a layered approach there. And then the conclusion, you know, it's a transition sentence, so just make sure there's a transition.

During these quick directions, Mr. Fordham’s shorthand seemed familiar to students and no one asked questions about what they needed to do during the three times that Mr. Fordham paused for questions. Mr. Fordham went on to make several suggestions about how to share responsibility in the group for completing the writing before turning his complete attention to conferencing with student groups while the rest of the class huddled in small groups bent over their notes and outlines as they organized their evidence for writing. Mr. Fordham had intentionally structured the expectations for

student group work so that students would rely on each other while they were working on their writing instead of him.

As he reflected on how he was attempting to facilitate student learning during our post-observation interview, Mr. Fordham shared that in the past he had been very structured and disciplined with his classes, but that he saw himself making changes to extend more trust to his students to monitor their own learning which was also evident in the shift he was making toward being more of a facilitator. For example, Mr. Fordham stated that he did not monitor the other students in the class while he was meetings with small groups. He believed that releasing more trust and responsibility to students involved a beneficial tradeoff that allowed him to work closely with students in the small group conferences, for example.

This was significant in that it represented a new belief in how to help students improve that was not grounded in his technical perspective of writing but in an expanding vision for student learning. Mr. Fordham reported that he was influenced by other teachers in the BWP during the summer who encouraged him to extend more ownership to his students during the writing process. He had worked out a way to structure the group time to allow for this and reported thinking to himself about his students, “You're human, you're going to have a little side conversations. I have to just accept that and let you do that.”

Mr. Fordham created a workshop environment with purposeful intentions for individualized attention during the writing process, which is a research-based practice that is not typically found in classrooms outside of the English Language Arts (Applebee & Langer, 2006). Although most components of Mr. Fordham's lesson cycle were

designed around students working on group projects, Mr. Fordham admitted that he found group work “horrible.” He elaborated on the challenges:

I just feel that's a skill they have to master, and I just, I don't believe there's a way you teach that. It's just experience. And so, I can model, I can be the task keeper, like let's get back on track, but at the end of the day it's, there's too many variables.

He further stated his belief that students just had to go through the process of learning to work in a group and that “it might honestly just be you bang your head against a wall a thousand times and then you find out, okay, this sucks. Let me find a strategy for dealing with people and how to get the most out of them.”

With his focus on achieving his broader vision of students being prepared for their life outside of the classroom, the attention to community-building within the classroom as a component of the writing process was not a primary focus for Mr. Fordham. The role of social interactions between students in the community was to make decisions about content and divide up tasks to accomplish the final product. Mr. Fordham did not have a strong vision for his classroom as a community and his decisions suggested that he neither viewed the writing process itself as a contributor to classroom culture nor did he view the classroom community as having a role in the writing process.

Because he was immersed in discussion with small groups, Mr. Fordham did not feel that he could judge whether the students working together were achieving a state of flow during their group work session. However, across the classroom, most students could be observed working in their groups on their outlines with many clearly engaged in discussion of the stock market and other topics related to the task at hand. I could see a group sitting close to me were engaged in discussion and writing the entire period. A few students could be observed working independently as they had elected to do so, while

three students sitting in the very back of the room who were in a group with an incomplete thesis statement appeared to be looking at their phones under their desks. However, the remaining 24 students had their books open, were writing on their outlines, and appeared actively engaged working on their assignment with members of their groups.

Although Mr. Fordham did not necessarily believe that students had made progress in their ability to do group work effectively, he was convinced of its value as another skill that students needed to learn to be competitive for 21st Century careers.

Video essay. Students' experience with the video essay represented a clear example for Mr. Fordham of the opposite of flow. Mr. Fordham realized that students struggled with the video essay assignment because they were lacking the skill set they needed to be successful. While Mr. Fordham argued in his writing for the BWP against the theory of the digital native, Mr. Fordham made assumptions about students' technology abilities and students had to complete their videos entirely on their own. Even though his school was a technology magnet school, Mr. Fordham did not have any technology in his classroom and no access ramp for bringing in a cart of computers even if he had wanted to. Mr. Fordham received several reports from students of their frustration with the experience of making their video essays by email:

They didn't want to be on video. The technology scared them. They felt overwhelmed and you know, to me it was that kind of, again, like I based everything off of that theory of flow where I could tell they were, well, it's because they don't have the skill still and so maybe this is going in the right direction because...they were proud of what they accomplished, but obviously they were challenged so they weren't, they weren't comfortable. They didn't feel they were on safe ground.

Even though he recognized that his students felt uncomfortable, Mr. Fordham also saw students' struggle as an indication that they were being pushed as learners which he felt was necessary if they were going to overcome broad educational inequities that he blamed for their technological skills deficit. This was a new dilemma for Mr. Fordham. Balancing students' needs as learners with his vision for bridging the gap between students' current skills and what they needed to be successful in high school was a new concern because of his shifting focus toward skill development.

Aligned with his beliefs in the need for students to develop "grit," Mr. Fordham saw confronting and overcoming their technology challenges as a positive step. "I was like, that's where the learning comes," he explained. He concluded that the video essay experience, while frustrating, was a turning point in students' taking ownership of their learning. Noting that they were still not where he would like for them to be, he said of the significance of the midterm project, "...I think things really clicked after that point for the rest of the year where it was like, oh wow, that forced them to at least try to comprehend structure, synthesis, things like that." He shared that in the sketches for their final exam, he saw connections that he was looking for, "like they figured out a trend on their own. Like oh, this happened in the Great Depression. This happened in World War II, this happened...Like there was no me telling them to make that connection. They did that on their own."

Feeling Lonely at the Tip of the Spear: Enacting Professional Learning

As the school year came to a close, Mr. Fordham had an expanding vision for what he had learned through implementing argumentative writing and literacy skills that he wanted to see ripple out from his classroom into his school community. He felt

committed to continuing the work going forward with his own students, but his vision for his practice was nested within a broader vision of educational equity, especially focused on preparing students for the changing economic prospects of the 21st Century. Because of this commitment, Mr. Fordham was not satisfied to simply enact his vision within the “shack in the parking lot.” He felt that there was a social justice imperative for the teachers in his school to pick up the cause and follow his lead. He explained his thinking:

If the schools are supposed to be the great equalizer, it should be that. Let's have a concerted, organized, not a patchwork, where some schools are doing it well and then in some schools some teachers are doing it well, you know...I feel I'm at the tip of the sword or spear that, that idea of like I'm realizing this and I'm trying to do this and then I'm looking around at other teachers who are just kind of like, you know, I give him a worksheet today, or I give him a primary source and I'm like, “Oh, let me see,” and it's like a paragraph. That's not going to help them.

Although Mr. Fordham was proud when students came back to him from 10th or 11th grade to share that his class was harder than their current Social Studies classes, the process he had gone through to implement his inquiry into his practice made him see a trajectory of student learning differently. Because Mr. Fordham was searching for a method to confirm that his teaching meant something for students' futures, he was disheartened by the thought that there were no solid building blocks in place to ensure that his students would continue to develop along the path that he felt he had put them on. He explained,

Being on that tip of the spear. Like, yeah, gut tells me I'm doing it right, but why isn't anyone else in the department putting in the effort or putting in the work or structuring the work the way I am?

His efforts to enact his vision of professional learning to create that safe space to fail with other professionals was not embraced by the colleagues in his department. He presented the TIW that he had developed for the BWP on using argument writing in his course to a

disappointingly small audience of four teachers from his school. Teachers from his department went to other presentations. At the end of the year, Mr. Fordham concluded that he felt more solidified in his teaching but also more alone than ever. He said:

I feel everybody's hearts in the right place. I just, I see the world the way I see the world and I don't know how to bridge that gap if people aren't seeing it the way I'm seeing it. And I feel like maybe it's arrogance. I feel I'm right. I feel like I am right. This is the way we have to go. This is the path, you know?

Summary

Through the development of his assessment-focused lesson cycle, Mr. Fordham enacted his vision for integrating literacy skills into his practice, crediting the Common Core standards and his involvement in the BWP Program for motivating his instructional approach. He developed a yearlong training process for students that focused on repetitive activities for analyzing primary and secondary sources, note taking, discussion, and organizing evidence to develop an original argument about historical themes utilizing logical appeals. Mr. Fordham felt he had achieved his aim of gradually building students' stamina and comfort level with the system and he had become more trustful of releasing responsibility to students for their own learning. However, he felt that students were not able to achieve that level of synthesis that he hoped for. Although Mr. Fordham also aspired to relevant and lively classroom discussion with students, he was still working out how to get there. Throughout the year, Mr. Fordham made difficult choices between competing elements of skill development and content coverage that left him questioning how well he had equipped students for understanding a shared history that he felt was essential to American citizenship. At times, he felt conflicted which showed up in the resurfacing of teacher-directed practices. Mr. Fordham ultimately concluded that his

decision to focus on developing students' literacy skills was a social justice issue and moral imperative that he was committed to. Mr. Fordham ended the year feeling that he had cemented his approach to teaching and that he had been a better teacher than he had ever been before; however, the lack of collegial buy-in at his school left him also feeling professionally isolated. He was disappointed by what he perceived as a lack of mutual engagement in what he envisioned was a multi-year process that should be a concerted and organized approach across his school and not just with him alone at the "tip of the spear." He ended the year questioning whether or not to stay in the profession.

CHAPTER 5: THE CASE OF MS. BRIA BUCKLEY

Ms. Bria Buckley is an eighth-grade U.S. History teacher at Dogwood Creek Middle School. A career changer, Ms. Buckley had taught for a total of seven years; her first three years she taught in an urban setting and then moved to MGPSS. She had taught seventh, eighth, and ninth graders; however, she had mostly taught eighth grade and is quick to confirm that they are her favorite age group to teach. Throughout her teaching career she has worked with mostly minority children; while she taught predominantly African-American students in the urban district, the students at DCMS are majority Hispanic/ Latino students.

Ms. Buckley had her sights set on the legal profession from an early age and majored in Law and American Civilization as an undergraduate. Her dream, since she had been in middle school, was to become a sports and entertainment attorney. After completing her undergraduate degree, she went to work at a family law firm as a legal assistant. She said of that experience, “I saw the good, the bad, and the ugly side of the law. In my heart, I still had a passion for law and government, but because I did not score high enough on the law school admissions test, I began to lose faith in who I was and what I was capable of doing.” When she decided that she wanted to change careers, she looked into education and found a special program for career-changers at Horizon University³, an HBCU, that paid the tuition for her teacher certification and offered discounted tuition toward finishing a master’s degree, which Ms. Buckley elected to take advantage of. Ms. Buckley recalled that one of the core values of the program was to be able to teach diverse populations of students. She stated that the focus of the program was

³ The name of the university Ms. Buckley attended has been changed.

“getting used to the idea of being a teacher, being able to teach inner city children, being able to relate to students, as well as deliver a high-quality education at the same time.”

Although the program did not have a specific concentration in Secondary Social Studies, Ms. Buckley took the Praxis exam and earned her teaching certificate in Secondary Social Studies and Special Education, K-12 with a master’s degree in Special Education.

Ms. Buckley characterized her decision to become a teacher as “accidental” in her personal writing piece that she wrote during the BWP Program. When she first started teaching, she admitted that she saw teaching as a stable job with benefits that would give her a chance to work with a subject that she had loved in school – United States History. She was surprised to find her greater sense of purpose in her role as a teacher.

Ms. Buckley has worked at Dogwood Creek Middle School (DCMS) for four years. DCMS is located in a suburban area of the school district in a residential neighborhood. The large middle school has over 1200 students: 77% of those students are Hispanic/ Latino, 19% are Black/ African American and less than 1% are Asian or White. During the 2017-2018 school year, the school received Title 1 funding with 57% of students receiving free or reduced meals. Upon entering the school building, visitors are greeted with signs in both English and Spanish, and Spanish can be heard in the front office as staff members communicate with visiting parents. A display case in the front lobby implored the viewer to “Be Somebody’s Hero,” the theme for the school year. Posters proclaiming DCMS P-R-I-D-E hung throughout the building reinforcing school expectations for Preparation, Respect, Integrity, Determination and Excellence. During the change of classes, the hallways were lively but orderly as students walk in cohorts to their next class. The one-level school was divided into grade level teams so that students

have the same set of academic teachers and spend most of their time together as a pack traveling from class to class in their grade level wing. Teachers were present in the hallways, and at lunch time, teachers escort students to and from the cafeteria in lines. Administrators and security personnel were also visible in the halls between classes, poking their heads into classroom to check in and greet students and teachers as they make their rounds.

Ms. Buckley described DCMS as very unique because of the one-to-one iPad program. “So, there's this huge iPad initiative push, this huge technology push,” she explained. Through the iPad initiative, students received their assigned iPads daily in their Homeroom class and carried them throughout the school day from class to class, turning them in at the end of the day when they return to Homeroom for dismissal. Ms. Buckley described the school culture as one that centers around group work and using the iPads for that purpose. Walking through the hallways during classes, clusters of students could be seen sitting together inside and outside of the classroom on the floor or in chairs working individually and collaboratively using their iPads. Ms. Buckley noted of the technology initiative, “I've been fortunate where most of my students have been wonderful, and so I really haven't had to worry about too many crazy things going on with them with the iPads, although I've heard stories about kids in other classes.”

Ms. Buckley, who served as the co-instruction leader for the Social Studies team, was assigned three sections of Honors and one section of on-grade level eighth grade classes during the 2017-2018 school year during the time of her enrollment in the BWP Program, which was different from years in the past when she mostly taught on-grade level students.

Upon entering Ms. Buckley's classroom in the middle of one of the eighth-grade wings, it was apparent that technology is central to the classroom environment. A white board was centered in the front of the classroom next to Ms. Buckley's desk. Ms. Buckley used this white board to project materials posted in Google classroom for instructional purposes. Students' desks were arranged in large table groups of six to eight students which supported Ms. Buckley's and the school's emphasis on group activities and collaboration.

The walls of Ms. Buckley's classroom were covered with bulletin boards and posters that revealed that this is a United States History classroom. One wall was adorned with portraits of historical figures of African-American heritage. Historical Thinking posters hung on another bulletin board alongside a word wall for vocabulary and posters outlining the Articles of the United States Constitution. On another bulletin board, there was a section labeled "Scholar Work" and a College Corner where students had created signs for various colleges and universities. Group Activity Procedures were displayed on the wall detailing how students will appoint roles for members of their group, how they would listen and speak in a discussion, and how groups members would share out with the class. Behind Ms. Buckley's desk on the walls were a collection of handmade cards of appreciation from several students recognizing her during American Education Week. As students quietly entered the room carrying their iPad, they quickly found their seats and directed their attention to the Smartboard where Ms. Buckley projected the warm-up question for them. Ms. Buckley greeted the class with a warm, "Good morning, scholars" to which the group responded in unison, "Good morning, Ms. Buckley."

Ms. Buckley's Vision

Through teaching, I've discovered that this is my passion - to help motivate children to discover their self-worth and press through their challenges and unapologetically pursue their aspirations. This is what God had in mind from the very beginning. There's a purpose in me becoming a teacher "by accident." I now believe that being a teacher is not only changing the lives of my students, but it is changing my life as well.

Make it Relevant: A Vision for Professional Learning and Growth

Ms. Buckley had routinely attended professional development experiences during her career; however, she shared that there were so many expectations of her as a teacher in terms of professional demands and initiatives that she has found professional learning overwhelming, fractured, and often difficult to implement. She stated, that "so many different things are thrown at us that say, 'Oh try this idea! What about this idea?' And I think like that's why like I used to go to PDs and write all these things down and I'm just like, when am I really going to have time to actually implement this?" Rather than attending formal professional development sessions, Ms. Buckley's vision for professional learning was practical. She envisioned participating in the sharing of ideas demonstrated in context so that she could see how the idea was "right in line with what I [am] already teaching, so it [is] easy to transition to."

Ms. Buckley's vision for making learning relevant to her teaching centered on opportunities to be inspired by other teachers, to address practice-based concerns with specific strategies, and to troubleshoot classroom problems with the other Social Studies teachers in her school, particularly teachers who also taught her U.S. History I curriculum. She envisioned department meetings with her Social Studies team as

community learning opportunities rather than simply for administrivia. She went on to explain her vision for this practice-centered learning:

Normally, I love being able to team up with my fellow eighth-grade history teachers and then seventh grade, would have their circle, sixth grade would have their circle and everyone's like exchanging ideas, lesson plans, strategies. 'What type of assessment are you giving?' 'Oh, I like that idea. I'm going to use that, too,' and for like everyone's kind of learning, in that sense. Like, 'Oh, let me try that' or 'let me try this activity,' you know, and then coming back the next week. 'You know, I tried that and that worked really well for my group. Thank you.' Or 'That didn't work so well. Maybe, you know, what, how was it successful for your group?' Like I've, I feel that's beneficial where I'm learning from my colleagues in that regard.

Ms. Buckley's focus on professional learning as an opportunity to try new approaches and engage in collegial discussion and reflection with other teachers were evidence of her practice-forward orientation. While her vision played a role in her professional development, her focus was on the practical aspects of implementation and relevance to her specific group of students over striving for a goal or a vision. Ms. Buckley frequently mentioned the need for her administration to prioritize time for this type of learning from colleagues which she reported was missing from her school. She remarked, "You can learn so much from who you are working with, if you're allowed the time to, and of course, if you have the right personnel."

Ms. Buckley was not seeking outside professional development when she signed up to join the BWP Program in the spring of 2017. However, her mother forwarded the information to her because, she explained, Ms. Buckley had always been good at writing and her mother thought it would be a "perfect" professional development opportunity for her. Ms. Buckley stated that even though she was very busy buying her first home, she decided that it was otherwise a good time to "add on to what I know as opposed to just

being complacent” which is another element of her vision for acquiring new and relevant knowledge for her own professional learning and growth in her craft.

Ms. Buckley described her motivation for stepping outside her school environment for this professional learning experience. She stated that she was looking for professional development “where teachers are treated like professionals, like that is something that we’re desperately missing.” She also envisioned receiving guidance on how to effectively address and implement the recent countywide literacy initiative that would help her integrate writing into the discipline. She explained, “In light of the whole literacy task push in [our district], it’s just such a negative thing, and I was hoping that the Writing Project would be a way for me to learn different writing strategies that I can specifically use with my kids.”

As was the case with all facets of Ms. Buckley’s vision, she held a practice-forward orientation focused on the specifics of improving her teaching craft through the development of the best methods that would work with the specific students in her classes.

Don’t Threaten My Zone: A Vision for the Teacher’s Role

I kind of take on that ownership role when it comes to my kids. If they get in trouble, like even though they tell us not to take things personal, but I do. And I actually think that has actually worked out for me at least most of the time (laughter). Because most, usually kids will realize, okay she is looking out for us. She cares for us. Let’s do what we need to do and get our acts together and so that’s all I really ask of them at the end of the day.

Ms. Buckley viewed her role in the classroom as that of a facilitator and protector of her kids. She stated that is why she loves eighth grade so much “because you can take the reins off a bit, but also pull them back on if you need to.” As a facilitator, she strived to be a guide and model for students while structuring activities that engaged them in

group and pair work to meet high expectations. She also noted that she aimed to be responsive to individual students' needs; Ms. Buckley's vision for facilitating students learning was multi-faceted as she simultaneously strived to be sensitive while building self-reliance and student ownership of learning. She further described her vision for facilitating students' learning meant allowing students to struggle at times so that they started to rely on themselves. She spoke of taking a firm stance with her students about her role:

They are not allowed to come up to me and say 'Is this correct? Can you check this before I turn it in?' It's like 'Have confidence that if I gave you the resources, if I gave you the tools to complete this assignment, you should have the confidence that all of your answers are correct or at least most of them are correct.'

Ms. Buckley confirmed that she felt able to fulfill this vision for enacting the role of a facilitator of student learning the "majority of the time" as she tried to balance her own high expectations with students' needs.

Ms. Buckley stated that achieving her vision for being a facilitator was possible "because of the roles that I do play, and I do embrace them on most occasions." She went on to elaborate:

I am very serious by nature, but at the same time, I'm compassionate when I see that other people need it, and I take on different roles, and I realize it. I'm not just teacher, I'm mom. I'm counselor. I'm an aunt. I'm a mentor. And sometimes, I feel like a preacher, too.

Ms. Buckley's vision for relationships with her students that extended beyond teacher-student relationships was reflective of culturally relevant pedagogy and her commitment to reaching minority children (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; 1995b). She further demonstrated this commitment when she described keeping a watchful eye on her students and attending to their well-being, both inside as well as outside of the classroom.

In the personal writing that Ms. Buckley created for the BWP Program, she selected quotations from her former students that captured what she referred to as testimonies to her impact on her students. These quotations, in effect, provided a mirror for Ms. Buckley to see her own vision for her role reflected back at her through students' descriptions of how she had touched their lives. Students expressed gratitude to her for being a role model, nurturer, advocate, and coach, for example. One student remarked that Mr. Buckley "stuck up for [her]" while another thanked her for being there when her mother passed away. Another student appreciated her for being fair and for giving everyone equal treatment. Ms. Buckley quoted one student who seemed to best capture her multi-faceted vision for her role in students' lives extending beyond the classroom and into students' futures. He said, "Thank you for being an amazing teacher and mother figure to me. You have taught us so much about life and history and have helped me strive to be a better person." Toward the conclusion of this piece of personal writing entitled, "Teaching by Accident," Ms. Buckley remarked on what these quotations from students suggested to her about her role:

Knowing that my students can trust me to have their best interests at heart has helped me to appreciate the good traits about myself that I didn't know existed. I take great pride in the way I defend my students and look out for them. It is the best part of my job! There is something in me that has to protect the underdog(s) - the one(s) who is counted out, the one(s) who is underestimated, the one(s) who is going through battle after battle in their life.

In an interview, Ms. Buckley shared that this protective instinct had a way of coming out when other staff members had dealings with her students, her curriculum, or her classroom. She confessed to wanting to say to a visiting literacy coach, "Don't threaten my zone. This is my territory. This is my lane." This statement revealed undercurrents of

strife and territorialism between staff members that had developed in her building and that extenuated Ms. Buckley's protective stance and isolation from other staff members.

Ms. Buckley's protective stance for her students extended to wanting to protect them from diminished expectations because of their learning challenges. Although she felt that she had the same vision for all of her students, she shared that with her students who may struggle, such as her English Learners, she saw her role as knowing her students well enough to motivate them to keep trying. She stated, "So I push them to make an effort and oftentimes what I've seen, they can do a lot better than they give themselves credit for."

Ms. Buckley also shared that her vision for developing relationships with her students included sharing her own struggles and bad days. She said:

I think with being a teacher these days, you have to learn when to be vulnerable because again, it's building that trust factor with the kids who already have so many opinions and perceptions about adults, even more than I realized, the stuff that they are really, genuinely afraid of.

Not hiding her frustrations and difficulties from her students was also part of her vision "just so that [students] will know that I am human."

Ms. Buckley's vision for her role continued to be driven and refined based on the feedback that she received from students. Her students affirmed that she is fulfilling a purpose for her life's work. She stated:

I want them to know that I want the best for them. And I know it sounds cliché, but I want them to be proud of who they are. I want them to be confident. And I don't want them to just settle for anything, like they are living in very scary circumstances, for lack of a better phrase. And I want them to be equipped and prepared to rise above those challenges.

Ms. Buckley's keen awareness of students' fears and concerns was essential to her vision for facilitating students' development. This was an essential and overriding element of

her vision that provided direction for her focus on students' development and her own growth as an educator.

Collaborative Accountability: A Vision for Student Learning

Consistent with her vision for her role as guide and protector, Ms. Buckley's vision for student learning extended beyond learning U.S. History curriculum to students learning about themselves and the world around them. This vision included creating opportunities for students to develop capacity and what Ms. Buckley believed were essential dispositions for their character development. Through her vision of student learning, educational experiences should play to students' strengths and also promote resilience. She explained that while her vision for her students had mostly stayed the same, how she implemented it was very much dependent on getting to know her students and discovering what works to engage and motivate them. She explained:

I think in the grand scheme of things, as far as what I want for my kids, that has remained the same. How I am going about it, that's definitely changing. With each set of kids, and with each different class really, you have to adapt and project yourself in a different way.

This focus on adjusting for specific students was indicative of Ms. Buckley's practice-forward orientation. This orientation influenced how she chose her inquiry focus during the BWP Program. Ms. Buckley was hesitant to make a firm decision until she had time to learn about her current students including their strengths and needs. When speaking of her students, she frequently put herself in her students' shoes to try to understand their motives. For example, she explained:

And the reason why I have this vision that my students are more confident and more comfortable with themselves and they embrace their intelligence like they don't shy back from it is because I was that student who just sat in class and did not speak, and when someone else would say the answer, I would be like I knew

the answer why didn't I just raise my hand and answer the question? So, I think that will go a long way in terms of building their character.

Ms. Buckley's vision for building students' character was most evident in the way that she aimed to foster a scholarly community. The term "scholars" was used throughout the classroom in places where other teachers might have used the term "students" including on objectives, classroom rules, and on a bulletin board where "scholars' work" was displayed. When asked whether referring to students as "scholars" was a schoolwide practice, Ms. Buckley paused realizing that it was just something that she has always done that she picked up in her teacher education program which had prioritized effective practices for minority students. Ms. Buckley's priorities for a community-centered classroom were indicative of a culturally relevant approach to teaching (Ladson Billings, 1995b). Ms. Buckley's vision of students as scholars took the form of students engaging in rigorous learning activities whereby they assumed roles and had opportunities to express their own opinions and judgments.

Ms. Buckley envisioned growth occurring and confidence developing when students exceeded expectations, "stepped up" or "rose to the occasion," terms that she used frequently to describe incidents in the classroom when students took initiative, adopted a proactive attitude in a group, stepped into a leadership role, or otherwise challenged themselves. Ms. Buckley's vision for student learning and development was not only based on a value for group work and collaboration that was clearly a schoolwide vision but also in her desire to instill a sense of shared accountability and reciprocity within the classroom community. She entrusted her students to use technology productively and appropriately; however, with that trust was an expected accountability to the community. Her vision for learning included students realizing the value of

collaboration through building on each other's ideas and learning to accept other points of view. She said, "I feel like it's good for them to be able to discuss [their ideas] with somebody else and get somebody else's perspective, and then at the same time, if they decide to hold on to their idea, then they're within their right to do so." She stated of her scholars, "[A]t this point in the year, they kind of operate like a big family, like you have your siblings who don't really care for the other, but they all know that they are in the same boat together and they kind of just learn to make it work."

Although Ms. Buckley claimed that she had the same vision for all of her students including her Honors students, English Language Learners, and students in her on-grade level classes, she specifically referred to her on-grade level students as "my babies." Although Ms. Buckley noted differences between her classes, she explained that her vision was to create a space that allowed for all of her students to be intellectually curious. She explained her belief that this freedom allowed for divergent thinking, "...so it's like they know how to make connections to things I wouldn't even think about." She further related that the qualities that other teachers viewed as challenging, she aimed to view as an asset. She explained:

I had the best discussions with the class that [other teachers] cannot stand because there were a lot of behavioral kids there, but I felt as though they just needed an outlet to be able to express how they felt about different things.

Ms. Buckley saw these opportunities for providing a safe space for students as essential for learning in her classroom. She further stated her belief that it was important for teachers to be willing to make the time in class and to follow the students' leads on these occasions. Ms. Buckley's emphasis on the classroom as a community was clearly evident in her vision for student learning. Although she wanted to see students reaching

for high academic performance, her vision for student learning was grounded in developing students' dispositions over other academic goals.

Own Your Own Truth: A Vision of Learning for the 21st Century

Ms. Buckley's vision for connecting the classroom to 21st Century society was motivated by her interest in helping students see the relationships between historical events and current issues and topics that "are playing a key role right now." Ms. Buckley speculated that students were at times overwhelmed grappling with current events as they were portrayed in the news. As she often did when thinking about her instructional vision as well as practical teaching decisions, Ms. Buckley put herself into her students' shoes and tried to imagine what it would be like for them to grapple with the issues that were constantly in the news cycle. During the time of my visits to Ms. Buckley's classroom, she shared that students in her largely Hispanic student population had been recounting stories of neighbors and family members being questioned by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers (ICE) recently in their school's neighborhood; some students had expressed fears that family and friends might be deported, which may have contributed to Ms. Buckley's specific vision for her students' preparation for 21st Century society at this point in time.

Ms. Buckley explained that because of her discussions with students about the roles of law and government in society, she envisioned students having a place to express and clarify their concerns in her class. She said that through open dialogue in her classroom, students were able to share their own perspectives as well as their personal feelings on contemporary issues:

I got to see what their fears were, what their passions were, what their concerns were. Because on the news, you hear all of these adults talking about stuff that is

going to affect them, but then you hear from a 14-year-old, and it's like 'I'm scared that this might happen if this law gets passed.' Or 'I'm scared for my family if this situation happens.'

Although she frequently referred to her students as being “very opinionated,” her vision for connecting her students to contemporary society was grounded as much in their emotional well-being as it was in wanting them to raise their voices. It was clear that Ms. Buckley envisioned students relating to contemporary issues not abstractly but instead on a personal level. She stated:

I [know] that with that particular age group, they are very opinionated. And I think it has a lot to do with their culture. It has to deal with even with the way that our society is evolving. It forces you to have an opinion and to not be afraid of it. Like there's this movement where you are supposed to ‘own your own truth’ and not worry about bending to what somebody else says...

She shared that while she herself wasn’t “obsessed with the news,” she wanted students to be able to connect learning in the classroom to contemporary events so that students were prepared to protect themselves and their families. She said, “Like every single thing that we discuss, you can find some connection in society, and my vision is for them to be able to evaluate all of that and to think critically when it comes to those things.” Ms. Buckley imagined communicating this message to her students: “You all should be aware of what’s happening, especially for the sake of your families, for your sake. Like in terms of wherever you're going, you just need to know how you make, how you might need to respond in a given situation.”

The statement clarified Ms. Buckley’s stance on her purpose for teaching students critical thinking skills as a necessity for being an active citizen and being able to stand up for their own rights. Broadly, Ms. Buckley intention was to cultivate students’

understanding of historical themes and real world issues so that students were equipped to take action in the world for justice, which was also central to her curricular vision.

Tracing Themes of Justice: A Curricular Vision

As a United States History teacher, Ms. Buckley held a curricular vision that reflected her passion and background in Law and Government. While her course spanned U.S. History from Colonization to the Civil War, Ms. Buckley's curricular focus was not related to specific historical content but instead to "showing the impact of our government in our society, the way culture is developing, and all of those things, which is why I love teaching it."

Ms. Buckley expressed her belief that students should learn to make connections across themes, especially themes of justice. She related:

Like theories and beliefs and practices have evolved through generations, and you are continuing to see the same basic theories play out in day-to-day society. You just have more components added to it, but the concept is the same.

Across vision dimensions, Ms. Buckley kept students' lives outside of school at the forefront of her decision-making process, and her curricular vision was no exception. Ms. Buckley was quick to confirm that teaching the Constitution is her favorite unit and that her vision for students learning is for her students to gain a deeper understanding about the way that the principles that provide the foundation for our government continue to "[play] a key role in everything that is going on today."

She elaborated on her vision for teaching the Constitution, in particular, "It's consistently like, like every week there's something. 'Oh, this reminds me of the Constitution.'" Ms. Buckley also shared her vision for students being able take a stand in the future because of their strong foundation in how institutions work within the

government and their understanding of the protections afforded under the Constitution.

She explained her aim for developing students as citizens:

So, my vision is for them to be confident in themselves and for them to have an understanding of how our government works, how society operates, and know that they don't have to just blend in. They don't have to just follow what everyone else is doing just because it's this is the latest thing or this is something that is cool quote, unquote. But that they can be independent thinkers, that's what I want for my kids.

Because of her strong beliefs about the importance of law and justice, Ms. Buckley's curricular vision and vision for connecting learning to 21st Century were completely intertwined. In her vision, the curricular content was to be used in service to greater goals of preparing students to be confident independent thinkers and productive members of society. She believed that sharing historical themes of justice and injustice would prepare students to protect themselves and others against potential threats to their rights, which was a vision deeply connected to her students' experiences.

Vision for Inquiry: Incorporating Debate-Style Activities in U.S. History I

Ms. Buckley came to the BWP Program with what she described as a negative attitude toward the county approach to writing improvement which had colored her views of her students' writing and the practice of assigning writing in her classroom. She stated that she was distressed by what she perceived as an "epidemic" problem with how students came to middle school lacking basic writing skills. She also stated that teachers were ill-equipped to address the problem because of the disconnect she had observed between students' instructional level in writing and the expectations for their writing on the PARCC standardized testing assessment that guided the countywide approach for writing improvement. Ms. Buckley further shared her concern that students were "being categorized as illiterate" unfairly because they were being rushed to accomplish

challenging writing tasks that they were not prepared for. As a result of this hurried effort, Ms. Buckley believed that students were not mastering necessary fundamental writing skills as they struggled with the complex writing tasks that were beyond their capabilities. In her application goal statement at the time that she applied to the BWP Program, Ms. Buckley made the following observation about how she viewed this experience affecting her students' attitudes toward writing:

I've learned through my years of teaching that instructing today's generation of students the value of writing is a demanding challenge. In my opinion, the challenge lies within the fact that the majority of students lack basic writing skills and are consistently being called to complete writing assignments that are extremely complex because of the push for being "college and career ready." It's not only a challenge for the students but their teachers as well - particularly on the secondary level.

In this statement, Ms. Buckley took a stand against what she believed was a mismatch between expectations and preparation for writing tasks. Ms. Buckley held the view that writing was "extremely complex" while the District presented writing as a simple "task" that could be accomplished. She viewed this approach as a disservice to both teachers and students' attitudes toward writing.

Ms. Buckley also speculated that technology was another factor contributing to students' negative attitudes and poor writing skills. Although she held high expectations for her students in general, she was unsure how to bridge the gap between what she viewed as a gap between students' skill level and school expectations of student writing as represented in the Common Core State Standards and countywide literacy task. She went on to pose a question that she would continue to grapple with during her time with the BWP: "How can I demand a 5-paragraph essay when students cannot write a complete sentence?"

Consistent with Ms. Buckley's practice-forward orientation, she was looking for practical solutions at the time of her involvement in the BWP Summer Institute. She hoped that she would find techniques that would "truly simplify the writing process for students so that teachers are actually able to implement successful writing strategies." She went on to state her conviction that learning to write is a "multifaceted process" which was why she was looking to "develop and share writing/literacy strategies that allow for ample time to be taught and mastered."

Central to Ms. Buckley's process of developing her inquiry focus was engagement in the BWP practice of small professional learning groups. During the summer phase of the program, all participants were members of both an interest-based book group and a writing workshop group. Both of these groups had authority to regulate their own process for collaboratively working toward common goals. At the end of the Summer Institute, each book group prepared a gallery walk presentation and each writing group member wrote a piece of personal writing which they revised and edited for publication through the process of giving and receiving peer-feedback. Ms. Buckley shared in a reflection at the end of the Summer Institute that the experience of professional collaboration and peer-feedback helped her to think differently about writing:

The opportunity to collaborate with two separate groups of peers (the writing group and the book group) gave me the chance to write, reflect, and revise my own work and way of thinking when it comes to writing. To my pleasant surprise, the experience was not painful! I truly appreciate the fact that I was able to be vulnerable with a group of professionals that I had just met and learn from them and work with them to accomplish a task.

By engaging in the writing process herself as part of a group where she could be “vulnerable,” Ms. Buckley’s vision for creating a writing community in her classroom expanded. The experience also influenced Ms. Buckley’s thinking about what it felt like for students to engage in writing as it was presented in her school and district. The concept of thinking differently or more positively about writing was one that Ms. Buckley mentioned several times as an outcome of her participation in the BWP Program, and which she positioned in contrast with how she had felt about writing during the previous school year.

In her Research Proposal for identifying her inquiry focus that was submitted at the end of the Summer Institute, Ms. Buckley focused on her own role in “assisting students with being able to analyze and evaluate history in their writing.” She further clarified her theory that

some students may be able to ask and answer analytical questions and defend their judgments and opinions during a discussion or lesson; but, when it comes to writing down those questions, ideas, and opinions, some of those students struggle to complete that task. There is a disconnect in the critical thinking process of analyzing and evaluating history when it comes to the part about writing.

This “disconnect” provided a focal point for Ms. Buckley to probe more deeply into her own teaching practice. True to her practice and student-centered orientation, Ms. Buckley’s vision for tackling this challenge was inspired by what she saw as student verbal abilities. She stated:

As a teacher, I can appreciate the fact that my students are able to be engaged in discussions or activities relating to history, but I would like to see this engagement be applied in their writing as well.

She referred to the research that she had read during the process of developing her inquiry focus proposal to support her thinking about the significance of writing for

promoting students' development. She ended her inquiry focus proposal with the following statement about the significance of writing as a human need: "After all, the mere act of writing is a 'fundamental intellectual activity' that causes students to learn by "promoting discovery, problem-solving, and organization,' (Pitard, 2011)." Ms. Buckley's instinct was that taking into consideration students' strengths and interests could help address the writing challenges she had observed in her middle school students. She said:

From my perspective, in order to address this problem, educators must first be willing to probe the interests of their students for the purpose of connecting those interests in the writing assignments that we create for them. I am anticipating this challenge with my teacher inquiry workshop. I imagine that learning more about this topic will lead towards discovering a way to further assist students with transcribing their historical thinking. Learning how to support students with developing and expressing their thoughts and opinions in their writing will further advance the ability to educate students and prepare them for high school, college, and employment.

This statement reflected a significant change in Ms. Buckley's thinking about student writing development. Her interest in probing students interests as a method for advancing students' writing reflected new beliefs about how to help students improve as writers that she had gained during her experience in the BWP Summer Institute.

As the school year started, Ms. Buckley had a general idea of what she wanted to focus on; however, she took the time to get to know her students' strengths and learning styles before settling on her approach which was consistent with her practice-forward orientation as she turned to her students' needs and interests as the source of her motivation for taking action. She reached out for help from members of her coaching group, including me, as she continued to refine her focus as the first quarter of the school year came to a close. Because her coaching group suggested that she focus her inquiry

question further, Ms. Buckley generated several possible directions that aligned with her hunch that interest-based activities might assist students in being better able to express their thoughts and opinions in writing. She ultimately decided to focus on using debate strategies and techniques based on her theory that “building up to the debate would further promote student interest in writing.” She shared what she saw as a meaningful goal to bring what she had learned during the BWP Program to impact students’ lives and futures. She stated that the “Own Your Own Truth” movement had inspired her thinking:

I wanted to, being in [the BWP Program] where you’re focusing on your writing strategies, I just felt like that would be a doable transition for me to focus on. Okay, now that I know my kids, this is something that they love, how can I get them to write more in connection to that. And so, I came up with the concepts.

Her final inquiry question that guided her work during the year was, “How can I use specific components of debate-style activities to engage students in their thinking and writing?” Her sub-question addressed the type of scaffolding students would need in terms of steps, stages, and directions in order “to support and evaluate claims in their speech and in writing.” As the end of the first quarter came to a close, Ms. Buckley settled on this focus, envisioning that participating in debate-style activities “would support students’ thinking, speaking, and writing skills.”

Summary

After attending the BWP Summer Institute and getting to know her students during the first quarter, Ms. Buckley further focused her initial broad idea of assisting students with their analysis and evaluation skills to a more refined focus on using components of debate-style activities to engage students in the thinking, speaking, and writing to support claims. This focus area brought together the various facets of Ms. Buckley’s vision. She had been teaching U.S. History for several years and admitted to

having developed a negative view of disciplinary writing due in part to the countywide literacy initiative that she described as a “push” for implementing writing in the content area that had disrupted her instruction and left her and her students feeling defeated. Although she embraced the one-to-one iPad initiative at her school, she also blamed the influence of technology for negatively influencing students’ writing skills, with their mistakes serving as a constant source of frustration. Even so, she came to the BWP with a very broad hope, “to become a better educator through the means of implementing certain techniques in the classroom that promote writing.” To that end, she intended to shift her thinking and use of writing in her classroom from her prior focus on evaluating students’ writing through a deficit lens. She theorized that writing for the purpose of engaging in debate and sharing opinions could make writing more relatable and serve as a platform for students to “own their own truths.” This represented a shift in Ms. Buckley’s beliefs about how students improve as writers. With her continued goal of serving as a facilitator of learning, she intended to help students experience real world connections between their own interests, hopes, and fears and themes of justice in U.S. History using writing as a mode of learning. She also intended for students to collaborate on their writing using technology as members of a scholarly community whereby students learned to share, evaluate, and value different perspectives which was part of her broad vision for student learning. She had a practical vision for enhancing her own learning and professional growth coming out of the BWP Program through collegial sharing of ideas and strategies with her Social Studies team. Even though her vision for how she would adopt a more positive perspective to respond to student writing within the schoolwide writing initiative

was unclear, she took a practical approach to outlining a series of “doable” steps to gradually build her own confidence that she could move in that direction.

Ms. Buckley’s Vision Enacted

Ms. Buckley was used to engaging students in several written tasks requiring evidence-based arguments across the year that she found difficult, including the countywide required literacy task which she described as like “pulling teeth.” She theorized that she could modify her approach for these assignments to include debate-style activities that would set the stage for transitioning to more developed responses in writing. She also aimed to approach writing in her classroom differently by bringing a new more positive and “strategic” perspective to her evaluation of student work that included incorporating ideas she learned during the BWP Institute. At the end of the year she shared the significance of these decision to her teaching:

It was, it was uniquely purposeful for me... but I really think this was a unique year in the sense that for once I had something real, whenever, I probably haven't done anything this specific since my research, my action research for my Master's program... but for this, uh, for me to be this strategic, if you will, like for me to look for certain type of responses, um, it kind of a refreshed my, my view on how to deliver something that I want to deliver.

A Timeline for Incorporating Debate-Style Activities in U.S. History I

Ms. Buckley took a practical, step-by-step approach to implementing her ideas, drawing on teacher inquiry practices whereby she took time to get to know her learners and test her initial ideas before settling on her inquiry focus area. By November 1, 2017, she had cemented a detailed plan of action as part of the course work for the second phase of the BWP Program which took place during the fall of 2017.

Ms. Buckley’s Research Plan reflected what she described as “doable” steps toward incorporating debate-style activities and daily writing in her classroom. Table 5 summarizes two months of her research plan which included student activities and assessments as well as teacher inquiry data collection and evaluation methods. She also included an expanding repertoire of other writing opportunities that she was planning to incorporate to learn more about students’ interests, to gather students’ perceptions of their learning and motivation for writing. These opportunities included goal setting and a new emphasis on written reflections, as part of the plan, which became a significant method for Ms. Buckley to measure the impact of her inquiry on student learning. The list of activities she selected were connected to curricular topics she was used to teaching such as The Constitution; however, she was now adding debate-style activities, mock trials, and mini-debates as new learning approaches.. The activities Ms. Buckley outlined in her plan included specific student writing activities connected to curricular content, teacher evaluation methods of student learning, and notations about possible data collection and evaluation approaches that would help Ms. Buckley answer her inquiry focus questions.

Table 5

Ms. Buckley’s Research Plan for November - December

Month	Student Activities	Teacher Activities	Marginal Notations about Data Sources	Marginal Notations about New Ideas
November	Reflection on writing for the literacy task - (Pocahontas DBQ)	Review reflections to assess student perceptions, compare literacy task vs. components of mock trial	Observational notes from Columbus Trial and Pocahontas Historical Question	Ideas: How did students participate, any parts that were a struggle for some students? What did students do

		(Note: Both have goal to promote critical thinking and writing but use different approaches.)	Notes Columbus Trial Activity reflections (Comparisons to real life, ex: wanting to be a lawyer, like the idea of being in a court setting)	well? How can future efforts be shaped from these observations? Personal connections to the activity are something else to add for reflection or during the investigation component
December	<p>Second Mock trial based on DBQ. (Students investigate texts individually, write evaluation individually, then placed in teams)</p> <p>Reflection assignment (understanding and perception of activity)</p>	<p>Evaluate Student reflections.</p> <p>Evaluate “individual write-ups” (graphic organizer, historical evaluation paragraph)</p> <p>Evaluate mock trial presentation using rubric assessing critical thinking and writing skills</p>	<p>Data from 11/9 mini mock trial debate: Students had to read their conclusion paragraph, defend their point of view grounded in evidence from the primary source and secondary source</p> <p>Some students listened to their opposing viewpoint and were convinced of the argument advanced by their opponent.</p>	<p>Students can share aloud reflection as a method of learning as well!</p> <p>Think about discussion with Beth how it was very insightful about how to gather certain types of evidence and how I learned about things from students so far.</p> <p>IDEA: In the future have student peer review conclusion paragraphs to verify all part of the writing assignment are met.</p>

Ms. Buckley used her research plan to develop her own learning goals and evaluation methods which evolved as an iterative process that built her own confidence. A strategist and planner, Ms. Buckley, who was more practice-forward than vision-forward, selected an inquiry focus area that already had vetted resources that included clear procedures, roles, and responsibilities for debate that were consistent with her vision for herself as a facilitator and would enhance her vision for creating a scholarly and collaborative community which eased the process for her to at first add-on and then integrate these new practices into her broader vision for providing students with simulated experiences to develop their confidence in their intelligence.

While the “Research Plan” was completed and submitted November 1, Ms. Buckley’s marginal notes reflected emerging ideas that were generated and recorded during a small group coaching meeting on November 9, when four BWP teachers and I met online to review their inquiry plans and to provide feedback to one another. As was typical of Ms. Buckley’s attention to detail and ongoing shaping of her inquiry focus through reflective practices and collegial discussion, she also recorded her thoughts for future use. These comments included her ideas to “make observational notes” about how students participated in the upcoming Pocahontas debate and to make notes of which parts of the debate assignment they struggled with. She also wrote a note to track student reflections for evidence of “personal connections to the activity” such as students’ comments about wanting to be a lawyer. Another note included a revelation that she had that students’ sharing reflections with the class could be assessed as a mode of learning. She also included her interest in trying to incorporate an additional mini debate with time permitting. Ms. Buckley’s plan, while not set in stone, outlined her intention to include

three formal “mock trial” activities during the five-month period between October and February with multiple opportunities for evaluating student learning through writing as well as students’ reflection on the process. Ms. Buckley adhered closely to this plan during the year and also found time and confidence to add a formal debate and additional planned as well as spontaneous debate-style activities during the year.

Table 6 below provides a snapshot of the four days I conducted observations in Ms. Buckley’s classroom at her invitation during the spring of 2018. Teacher participants were asked to select lessons for observation that aligned with their inquiry focus area and envisioned reforms to their practice. Although Ms. Buckley had already completed the formal mock trial and formal debate activities that were listed in her “Research Plan,” she continued to work with her students all year on her inquiry focus questions. As a result of the timing of my observations, I requested that Ms. Buckley select lessons that she felt were an extension of her inquiry focus area or when students would be engaged in activities where she envisioned them utilizing their learning from their debate and mock trial participation or demonstrating the capacity to express themselves in writing in the ways that she had targeted. In the table below, I include Ms. Buckley’s description of how the lesson was connected to her inquiry focus. Ms. Buckley selected lessons that offered a variety of lesson elements including students working at learning stations, conducting group research, making formal presentations, and drafting a collaborative written report. Because Ms. Buckley made frequent mention of the differences between her classes, on two occasions, I observed two different classes so that I would have a common frame of reference for discussing with her the differences that she perceived. I also observed two student groups on the day that they presented their Teach-for-a-Day

projects because these presentations were so clearly connected to Ms. Buckley’s vision for students to develop their confidence and not shy away from demonstrating their intelligence as well as her students’ visions for their roles as scholars that they all wanted me to see them. Additionally, because Ms. Buckley regularly referred to county-mandated writing tasks, I requested the addition of a final lesson observation on June 8 so that I could observe students working on a new county-mandated Capstone Project for Honors students while Ms. Buckley facilitated that process.

Table 6

Ms. Buckley’s Lesson Observations

Lesson Date	Class Observed	Lesson Content Topic	Inquiry Focus Connection	Lesson Elements
4/19/18	Period 2 55 minutes Honors 8 (23 students)	Bill of Rights Analyzing and evaluating the meaning and importance of rights	Informal debate opportunity; writing justifications	Warm-up in Google classroom; small groups responding to scenarios, station rotations activity
5/17/18	Period 1 55 minutes Honors 8 (26 students)	Teach-for-a-Day Project research	Taking a position on historic concepts, expressing opinions	Warm-up goal setting, independent research, group composing of a PowerPoint presentation and instructional activities
5/17/18	Period 2 55 minutes Honors 8 (24 students)	Teach-for-a-Day Project research	Taking a position on historic concepts, expressing opinions	Warm-up goal setting, independent research, group composing of a

				PowerPoint presentation and instructional activities
5/31/18	Period 2 55 minutes Honors 8 (22 students)	Teach-for-a-Day Final presentations	Expressing a position and being able to defend it, evaluating information	Student group created formal lesson; interacting with peer audience; peer feedback
5/31/18	Period 3 55 minutes On Grade 8 (19 students)	Teach-for-a-Day Final presentations	Expressing a position and being able to defend it, evaluating information	Student group created formal lesson; interacting with peer audience; peer feedback
6/8/18	Period 2 55 minutes Honors 8 (24 students)	Capstone Project group drafting	Group argument writing about a social issue of interest using argumentation techniques similar to debate (argument and counterargument)	Group collaborative drafting; discussion of evidence, development of interview questions

Debating Historical Controversies: Enacting a Curricular Vision for Writing in U.S.

History I

While Ms. Buckley decided to introduce debate style activities as well as other daily writing opportunities to her students as part of her approach for developing students' literacy skills and as a way of engaging students with U.S. History content, she maintained many of her usual lessons and projects that she had developed over the years. Ms. Buckley had a practice-forward orientation which was evident in how she relied on a set of principles of practice and classroom routines. These practices supported her

curricular vision for teaching U.S. History through project-based and experiential learning opportunities. Her intention with these choices was to make the content engaging and relevant to her students' lives with a focus on themes of justice that connected the curriculum to real world events. As the year started, Ms. Buckley worked within these lessons, projects, and classroom routines to find new opportunities to develop students' writing and literacy skills. She also was looking for opportunities to use writing to serve her long-held goals for developing students' dispositions, especially their confidence.

Because of her focus on practice, her initial approach was to *add on* debate style activities to established activities and projects that she was already planning to teach, which she believed would make the writing components of those projects more palatable. She believed that requiring students to write down ideas first for accountability purposes was an important component of the process, allowing them to proceed to the debate only after they had completed the writing. In her Research Data Collection and Analysis created for the BWP fall course, she explained that she had originally wanted to go head first into a full class debate but decided to pull back and take small steps as she implemented her plan. She decided to start on a "mini level" with the goal to teach her students "the particular steps to further ensure that they write something good, they write something supportive and defensive of their argument and that they're able to articulate it without being nervous about it or being embarrassed about it."

Her first attempt was to add a mock trial activity during the class's study of Christopher Columbus. Ms. Buckley, in keeping with her curricular vision, selected a topic that revolved around a question of justice. The trial centered around the premise

that in 1492 there was a genocide of the Tainos, a group of indigenous people and the trial was to decide who was to blame for the murders. Ms. Buckley played the role of the prosecutor and read the indictments. To prepare for the trial, students acting as lawyers worked in small groups to create a defense for their assigned client, either Columbus, Columbus' crew, King Ferdinand, Queen Isabella or the Tainos. In their defense statements, students were to cite evidence from another defendant's indictment in order to strengthen their case. The student litigation teams were able to question each other during the trial with the group that had the most evidence correctly cited declared the "winner" of the trial. Ms. Buckley recalled that her classes were cautiously excited by the assignment:

I remember the excitement that they had, and I was able to see their willingness to work with each other, like even with the [on grade level] group. Like they, at first, they were like frustrated because they were like, how are we supposed to defend somebody who killed somebody else? And so, like early on, like they kind of showed their character with that. Oh, they can evaluate morals and express that they may have an issue with trying to defend something that they're, that they don't necessarily support. And whereas, I would say the majority of the Honors classes saw it as a challenge that they wanted to conquer to see if they can make somebody who is horrendous, that they could still prove their point and win for their defendant.

This was a significant discovery for Ms. Buckley who was expanding her use of writing in her classroom to include reflective writing-to-learn strategies as a formative assessment practice and method for learning more about how students were engaging as learners.

At the end of the trial, each group submitted their defense statement as a "group write-up." While Ms. Buckley felt the trial went well, performance was uneven across groups. She reported that "some did good and then other groups, they kind of just stood

there. And you could, I could tell that not every kid participated with that assignment, and I definitely wanted to fix that going forward.”

She refined her approach with the second attempt when students engaged in an informal debate on what Ms. Buckley called the “controversial historical question: Did Pocahontas save John Smith’s life?” Again, this debate was an add-on to a document-based writing assignment that Ms. Buckley had assigned in the past. Ms. Buckley asked students to assume the role of “private investigators” for the research component whereby they engaged in sourcing, close reading, and contextualization processes to collect and compare evidence from sources including two primary source documents from different years that presented accounts of John Smith’s experience from his perspective and a timeline of historical events. Students also viewed a video clip from the Disney’s *Pocahontas* film. Ms. Buckley explained how she was building students toward being prepared to engage in debate:

So now can the kids write a defense as to which one do they believe? Do they believe the Disney movie or do they believe John Smith's own historical accounts, which were two very contradictory accounts, so they had to decide which one was factual and in their writing, they had to answer specific historical questions and formulate a paragraph explaining why did they believe one source over the other.

According to Ms. Buckley, students were almost evenly divided between those who said yes and those who said no as their answers to the historical question. This led into splitting into groups for a mini group debate activity with students debating which version of the story was more credible. She remarked, “So like they really had to think out loud with each other.” Ms. Buckley’s interest in students’ collaborative process, or “thinking aloud with each other,” was evidence of her theoretical perspective of writing development. Although Ms. Buckley had no other formal training in writing outside her

experience with the BWP Institute, she held a very specific perspective of how students developed as writers through social interactions. For teachers who hold a social action perspective, learning to write is about learning to respond to social situations (Beach et al., 2015). To that end, students learn writing through navigating social practices such as adopting alternative viewpoints and engaging in collaboration which was Ms. Buckley's purpose for students' participation as a team in debate activities (Beach et al., 2015). Ms. Buckley's position as a facilitator of student teamwork and her selection of debate-style activities demonstrated the value she placed on students learning through making their own rhetorical decisions within social interactions which is consistent with a social action perspective (Beach et al., 2015).

Ms. Buckley noted that both activities provided an opportunity to learn more about her students' strengths and interests, which was a benefit that she frequently mentioned. She said, "And I thought I was successful in terms of seeing which type of kids get excited about something like this, which ones are a bit more reserved and hesitant, and whether it's because they hated public speaking." She concluded that most members of the group were ready to speak this time during the mini-debates with the help of their written answers. Ms. Buckley also noted that she saw many students had increased their efforts in their writing while some still had difficulty forming their responses. She was encouraged through these experiences as well as other informal debate style activities during the first semester to consider how she might move forward with a formal debate. Ms. Buckley's plan was incremental and allowed her room to add aspects as the year went on and as a guard against feeling overwhelmed. In this way, as

her vision became more refined, she was able to use it effectively to ‘guide, measure, and assess” her practice (Hammerness, 2001).

Discovering New Platforms for Owning Your Own Truth: Enacting Learning for the 21st Century

Ms. Buckley had a strong vision for how the learning in her classroom was to connect students to the 21st Century society which she defined as helping them be prepared for their current and future citizenship. She was very interested in challenging her students in ways that would prepare them for their future even though she was not a fan of the way that the standardized testing movement used the term “college and career readiness” against students. Ms. Buckley’s personal interpretation of 21st Century skills could be seen as evidence of her stance on “college and career” readiness. She made frequent reference to creating learning opportunities to develop students’ capacity for productive citizenship; however, her particular focus was for students to understand their rights and to be prepared to take action to protect themselves in the event that their personal liberties or rights were violated. She also intended to engage students in experiential learning opportunities that would develop their leadership and confidence and prepare them to act on their own beliefs. Ms. Buckley’s focus on growth in her students’ confidence and self-awareness as relevant evidence of their writing development were also consistent with her social action perspective (Beach et al., 2015).

When discussing her intentions for student learning, Ms. Buckley’s frequently mentioned students being able to process and respond to the world around them. She believed that in order for students to do so, they needed to be capable of taking action in real world situations. One of the instructional approaches that Ms. Buckley used

throughout the year for this purpose was to create learning simulations whereby students assumed roles as arbiters of information, truth, and justice. For example, during the Columbus mock trial, students were “lawyers;” during the Pocahontas mini-debate, students were “private investigators.” Later in the year, students acted as Constitutional “judges” deciding whether or not citizens’ rights were violated; they also acted as researchers and “reporters” for their Capstone Project as they left the classroom to interview teachers and students on their opinions on various social issues. Even on an everyday basis, Ms. Buckley wanted students to see themselves and each other not as students but as “scholars.” Regularly, students were examining issues as they took on roles, gathered information, evaluated perspectives and ultimately took a stand to justify a position, which were all important skills that Ms. Buckley wanted them to learn for her unique vision of citizenship.

Debating Constitutional court cases. Through her work on her inquiry, Ms. Buckley saw opportunities to use speaking, writing, and debating as methods of educating students about their rights as citizens through grappling with relevant contemporary situations and cases. In discussing her approach to having students “judge” Constitutional court cases, as an example, Ms. Buckley explained that she selected the activity because of the “real life situations and a lot of them being based on actual cases that went to the Supreme Court or were actually heard in court.” She had found the year before that students had unexpectedly “debated” with each other over which Constitutional amendments had been violated, and she decided to try to leverage that instinct further to enhance students’ ability to consider multiple perspectives. She further stated that her intention was for students to gain a nuanced understanding of the

differences between a true violation of legal rights and what students might feel or believe as unfair. As was consistent with her vision, she wanted her students to relate to the task which she believed would help them to recognize that there are “tons of different situations every single day, even in school” where someone has to determine whether or not there was a violation of someone’s rights. She explained the real-world scenarios that students would be reading and evaluating:

So, there are situations where laws are broken. People don't follow the rules in the real world, and you need to know if you end up in a situation, what rights do you have? And so, for this activity, for them to really see at work different parts of the law, how they can be factored into a situation or maybe they don't apply in certain situations, because that was another factor they had to decide while they were at each scene. Did they actually lose any rights...? So, it's like they're learning, you know, what's the difference between what is your legal rights, in terms of rights that you have that somebody else can't violate versus what you may think is fair, may not actually be legal and vice versa.

By having students work in groups and rotate through the various scenarios in stations, Ms. Buckley intended for students to have fun while also “giv[ing] the kids a strong opportunity to evaluate the law in ways that they can understand it.” She went on to explain that the scenarios were not all clear cut and that more than one of them involved multiple amendments that had been violated, which would present a challenge to students and encourage debate, she hoped.

I observed Ms. Buckley’s “quiet” second period Honors class on the day after they were introduced to the Constitutional Amendments. At first, Ms. Buckley had invited me to see her first period class that she had described as being the most vocal and enthusiastically involved in all of the debate opportunities during the year; however, that class ended up a day behind in the curriculum because of receiving a punishment essay for poor behavior with a substitute teacher. Of her second period class, Ms. Buckley

wasn't sure that they would engage in the same level of argumentation with the Constitution scenarios. In describing her hesitancy, Ms. Buckley further described her experience working with this group of students and how they had complicated her usual expectations of eighth graders and challenged her theory about students' interests in sharing their opinions:

Because that's the one class where, um, the first week I had to really break it down to them and I'm like, 'You are going to have opportunities where you are going to be in front of the class and you're going to have to speak and, you know, and I told them, I'm like, when I was your age, that was the thing I hated the most. So, I get it. I understand it. And even to this day, like I'm very selective when I do speak in front of other people. Like I think about what I say before I say it. Like I've always been one of those people and I'm also the type of person, I don't need everybody to know what I'm thinking all of the time like other people do. Um, so I have emphasized that to them that it's important that you demonstrate your intelligence, don't be bashful. Um, it's a chance to show off how great you are.

The day before I was scheduled to observe, Ms. Buckley had rushed to get through an overview of the Amendments because of an unexpected interruption in the schedule which she described as not her usual or preferred mode of teaching. As the period started the day I was there to observe, Ms. Buckley presented the students with an example as a warm-up activity to model the reasoning she wanted to see as they evaluated the individual scenarios by citing appropriate Constitutional Amendment(s) to justify their judgments. She proceeded to read the scenario that was posted in Google Classroom for students to respond to:

So, suppose there were a group of teenagers that were gathered quietly on a street corner. Neighbors ended up complaining and they called the police asking them to arrest those people for getting together as a group. Do the police have reason to arrest these teenagers? I want you to explain your answer and, in your response, make sure that you cite which amendment that you think applies in this situation. So, you have permission to look at your notes from yesterday.

As students typed their responses on their iPads, it was evident that they were used to responding to questions such as this one where they were asked to support and justify their responses with evidence. The structure of their responses included restatements of the question, the reason that the teenagers' rights were violated, and a reference to the amendment or amendments that protected the teenagers' rights. In their responses, some students put themselves in the shoes of the teenagers in their response. For example, one student noted that the Fourth Amendment means that "police cannot take our homes, papers, or us without a valid warrant based on probable cause." The student concluded that the neighbors did not have a valid reason for the teens to be arrested. Other students cited different amendments including the first and fifth amendment. According to a show of hands, all students indicated that they believed that the police did not have the right to arrest the teenagers and that their rights had been violated.

As closure to the warm-up activity, Ms. Buckley shared with students the significance of the assignment as it applied to the real world:

All right, so this activity that you all just completed, it's a perfect example of what you all are going to do today, and in the real world, this is actually what lawyers do on a daily basis if someone brings a case to them or a complaint to them or if there have been accusations where charges are filed against a particular person and they need a lawyer, the job of a lawyer is to decide whether or not, um, there's enough evidence to convict their client and even if there is, a lawyer is supposed to be responsible for trying to make sure that from a client is either found not guilty or at the very least treated equally in court.

Then, Ms. Buckley shared with students that they would now have "the opportunity to be the judge by looking at various court cases and evaluating them." Before asking students to count off into groups of three, Ms. Buckley reiterated her interest in students' defending their positions with their group members:

So again, I know some of you are more ready to defend your opinion more so than other people. But again, me and Ms. Singleton, we're looking forward to hearing your discussions but also make sure that you write down a good explanation in which amendment or amendments are involved in each case scenario.

With that, she directed students to move to the scenarios which were posted in the classroom and also outside the classroom in the hallway for students to work together to determine if a right had been violated. During the period, as students traveled freely between the classroom and the hall way, students could be heard in quiet discussion as they conferred with each other over the specifics of the case and some bantered back and forth on which amendments might have been violated like one group who was considering a scenario about an individual whose gun was confiscated by the police because he was suspected of terrorist activity:

Student 1: (Students read the scenario silently) It's the Second and Fourth Amendment because...

Student 2: Because he has the right to own a rifle and they have no proof that he was engaging in any terrorist activities.

Student 3: No, they said they didn't have a warrant.

Student 2: They have no proof that he's connected to any terrorist stuff.

Student 1: He completely has a right...

Student 2: Because they don't know.

Student 3: They didn't have a warrant.

Student 1: Because they don't know...

Student 3: (Students begin composing answers on their papers) What is this?

Student 1: He completely has the right to a firearm, and they didn't have a warrant. It never says they had a warrant.

While most groups engaged in similar banter referring to specific reasons and evidence to support their positions, there were a few instances when groups debated violations to amendments particularly when the scenarios involved multiple amendments. As Ms. Buckley rotated around the classroom checking in with students, students could be heard discussing different amendments, referring to rights, interpreting the

significance of contextual details in different scenarios including geographic location and age of people involved as well as bringing in their background knowledge. This included a discussion between a student who asked Ms. Buckley about Miranda rights and a connection another student made between a scenario involving physical punishment and Hammurabi's Code, a topic that this group had studied in 7th grade. A few students could also be heard sharing opinions with each other about the severity of the punishments as well as a discussion that occurred over whether or not children had the same rights as adults, as they considered whether or not legal rights had been violated.

Reflecting on students' written explanations after the lesson, Ms. Buckley noted a mix of written responses that were well-developed with justifications and others that "got straight to the point." She assessed:

They're like thinking about it and they're like giving their own defense as to why they think this, which was something that I did emphasize to them. Um, I think before the lesson itself, like that day and definitely the day before that, you know, even if other people in your group, if they don't agree, you can still state your reason and write down your own and then when it's time to review, everyone will find out whether or not who's right or wrong for each one.

This was another situation where Ms. Buckley wanted students to wrestle with concepts for the purpose of developing their reasoning abilities and taking a stand on their own position rather than focusing on correct answers, which was one of her reasons for putting students in groups and making this a station activity. This clearly connected with Ms. Buckley's vision for students to show their intelligence and "own their own truth." It also demonstrated her social action perspective of writing development (Beach et al., 2015). In Ms. Buckley's community of scholars, students were making rhetorical decisions and engaging in metacognitive and decision-making processes as social

practices. Ms. Buckley recalled saying to student groups as she was rotating around the classroom, “Well, if that's what you think, that's what you write. I'm not going to tell you the right answer. Because this was students first exposure to this content, Ms. Buckley went on to say that rather than accuracy, she planned to evaluate students’ effort. She explained, “If it made sense to them, if they were connecting it to an amendment and they were trying to apply it in a situation, even if it was either the wrong amendment or if altogether their answers should have been no if it was yes.” This statement aligned with her vision for students standing up for their own opinions. While Ms. Buckley heard less debate in her quiet Honors class, she was proud to report in her on-grade level class there were several times “where I saw, or I heard, multiple points of view, multiple evaluations of the scenario.” Ms. Buckley fostered a classroom community where students took on roles as decision-makers. Her emphasis on students considering multiple perspectives was consistent with her social action perspective of writing development.

Debating whether or not to arm teachers. Ms. Buckley was not one to shy away from bringing controversial issues into her classroom. As she was teaching her favorite unit on The Constitution, gun violence and gun control legislation were constantly in the news cycle, and school shootings had become a topic in the national conversation. Class discussions about provocative topics clearly supported Ms. Buckley’s vision for connecting the curriculum to students’ fears and concerns as well as to her other intention to foster an understanding of themes across history. Ms. Buckley thought the current discussion about whether or not teachers should be armed was an important topic to raise with her students within the context of Constitutional rights. She initially presented the topic as a four corners activity with students writing their opinion before

selecting a corner to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement. She quickly realized that the issue could be developed into something more to advance her work on her BWP inquiry focus. She explained her thinking:

The whole guns in schools issue was just huge, and I wanted them to, I initially just wanted them to have a chance to be able to speak their minds about it. And then it's kind of, 'Well, we'll just see how this goes with the, with the debate.' And then it became more formalized in nature because they were finding all of these different sources.

Ms. Buckley decided that arming teachers was a perfect topic for the formal debate that she had been envisioning her classes were building up to all year. Her students were excited about it and actively engaged in preparations. She related:

And I thought that was a perfect connection to what was actually going on in our country at that exact time. So, to bring a real-world connection and an introduction to a new unit. And this was really their opportunity to do thorough research and assign one group to be the affirmative team and one group to be the negative team. And the kids had to work together as a group to put this information together.

This was a specific turning point for Ms. Buckley as she was able to bring facets of her vision together to use writing as a connecting thread between the curriculum and a real-world issue of importance to her students. In this iteration of using debate in her classroom, Ms. Buckley was integrating debate activities with the curriculum rather than using debate as an add-on activity.

Ms. Buckley facilitated the process by providing students with specific steps along the way "like to incorporate the writing process so that yes, of course they're expressing their opinions, but you also need to find evidence that's going to enhance your opinion or to further support your opinion." Her directions included the following

suggestions for research and to further connect student preparation to their unit on the Constitution:

Search the internet for any concrete reasons to defend your answer. Some questions you may consider:

- Is there a law that supports my opinion?
 - Is there a law in the Bill of Rights that supports my opinion?
 - Are there any positive or negative consequences to support or oppose my opinion?
 - Are there any politicians or celebrities that support my opinion?
- If so, what's their opinion on this issue?

In addition, Ms. Buckley developed checkpoints including warm-up questions and exit tickets on Google classroom to encourage students to think and act like debaters. For example, she asked: "What is one counter argument that you think that the other team is going to make?" and "What is your strongest piece of evidence?" Although she already viewed herself as a facilitator student learning, she had not focused on facilitating formative feedback during the writing process in the past. By adding metacognitive questioning, Ms. Buckley demonstrated her changing beliefs about the role of goal setting and reflecting on the writing process as a strategy for helping students improve as writers.

Ms. Buckley had a strong vision for her classroom as a community. Her practice-forward vision coalesced around reciprocal relationships. The success of her selection of debate activities was fundamentally dependent on the role of the classroom community as students were not simply developing an argument in writing but also engaging in argumentative discourse to be directed at multiple members of their own class. Student groups were responsible for delegating specific roles within the debate structure that Ms. Buckley shared with them. She said:

And then they had to divide who was going to speak first, who was going to make a counter argument, who was going to make the third counter argument, who was

going to be your closer. So, from seeing how easily, because I didn't even have to tell them, oh, you know, make sure you divide this. All I said was 'divide and conquer...'

This debate offered a significant learning experience for Ms. Buckley as she endeavored to extend more responsibility for students to work collaboratively and to take ownership of their own learning process. Ms. Buckley believed that students needed accountability for better writing and that working collaboratively with peers would strengthen that accountability. By also extending students freedom to "divide and conquer," she found that students developed their own approaches and innovative solutions.

Ms. Buckley reported that students "stepped up" in other ways and took initiative when it came to prepare for this debate. For example, some groups set up a shared Google doc on their own for organizing their arguments. Some of Ms. Buckley's students proceeded to take the debate preparation a step further, in effect, adding a real-world component that Ms. Buckley had not envisioned. As they gathered evidence, some students balked at her suggestion to consider whether there was a celebratory or politician who shared their opinion on the issue. She reported that students asked if instead they could interview staff members. She recalled: "I let them go throughout the building and ask other teachers and they asked our school resource officer which was powerful. His testimony to that question was just powerful." She went on to explain:

He was like 'Absolutely not' because he gave concrete reasons as to why he disagreed with that on down to stuff that the kids had already researched, and had said, "What about the training? Do teachers have time for that? Teachers are already stressed out; Do you want to add something else on their plate?"

Ms. Buckley reported that as groups started conducting interviews, more and more groups also joined in and also gathered first-hand accounts to support their side of the

debate. Because of her practice-forward orientation for classroom culture, Ms. Buckley was comfortable balancing her role with students' roles and positioned students with a high level of authority which was evident in how students were extended the opportunities to gather their own research, choose their own roles during the debates, and to structure their time during group work.

As the research portion of the debate preparation was wrapping up, Ms. Buckley shared that suddenly the student body and staff were informed of a student-sponsored walkout against gun violence to occur the following day. She explained that staff members were not informed of the plans ahead of time and students were not prepped and, therefore, many students acted inappropriately. She said, "as a Social Studies teacher, I was just bothered by the way it was handled." This story illustrated Ms. Buckley's larger vision for how administrators and teachers should have a collective vision for addressing real world issues with students.

In contrast to the behavior on display during the student walkout, Ms. Buckley's students went forward in earnest with their full class debate on Whether or Not to Arm Teachers within days of the walkout. The debates lasted between two and three 55-minute class periods and involved all of the students in each of her classes. Ms. Buckley selected two students in each class to serve as judges with her to ensure an impartial and fair verdict. She explained of the procedures she used with the student judges:

And they had to remain neutral and they had to give a tally for every piece of evidence that they heard. The students had to say, 'According to CNN.com,' you know, to give evidence that way, and they also had to jot down facts that they heard to help them with their decision....But, in all instances except for one class, we all came to the same conclusions in terms of how many points we allocated to each team, so they were listening for the right things.

Although Ms. Buckley felt that the judging of the debates had been handled fairly, some students had strong reactions to the outcome that carried on after the debate had ended and even spilled over into their other classes, which Ms. Buckley heard about from her colleagues. She explained one such example:

I know one kid, like the kid that was very dominant, like apparently, he just had this meltdown like, 'If everybody would have decided to speak then we would have won.' In spite of me telling him, I'm like 'If you fall back just a little bit. I'm not telling you to lose your passion, but you're coming off as threatening to where no one else wants to speak.' Even when other kids went up during the debate, he was like, 'I need to add onto what she said.' I'm like 'You didn't even trust your teammate to finish her statement, like you had to add onto that like that's telling her what she said wasn't good enough and you need to clean up her mess, basically,' and he seemed to process what I was saying to him and how he comes off because a lot of times, people don't even realize how dominant they are.

As a result of this unexpected reaction to the outcome of the debates, Ms. Buckley decided to have students reflect on their experience as an outlet for them to express themselves about the and also with the hope that students would gain some insight into their own learning and preparation.

Looking back on the debate process across the year, Ms. Buckley reported many mostly positive results. She found herself inspired by the passion students brought to their preparation and the authenticity of her students' expressions. She even created an end of the year award to recognize two students who stood out for their debate passion, including the student she described as having had the meltdown. She said of how her students had inspired her: "Because you can have an idea as a teacher in terms about how a discussion will go, but to really understand the originality of their ideas is really inspirational to witness especially, coming off those most recent debates." Ms. Buckley

continued to implement additional debates throughout the year based on the format that she had fine-tuned. She concluded of her iterative process:

And it also, gave me a chance to, in the beginning, like to see what they were coming through the door with, with the first trial one of the assignments and then, you know, make some changes, implement it again, see what the results were and then try something different for the third time. And then to see how successful that was to repeat that. So that was something that enhanced my teaching practice that I definitely plan to implement in years to come.

Valuing lost lives over lost iPads. In addition to Ms. Buckley's students' reactions to the National School Walkout, there was an additional lingering influence of the debate that carried over to a real world incident that occurred in school toward the end of the year when a group of eighth grade students on the other grade level team abused their iPad privileges and interfered with a testing application on their iPads and were caught. As a consequence for their infraction, the teachers on their team decided to confiscate the iPads of not only the perpetrators but all of the students in both of the classes involved, leaving some eighth graders with access to iPads while the others did not. The students who were penalized but not guilty of the hacking scheme felt this was an unjust punishment that violated their rights, and with the support of their own Social Studies teacher, Ms. Buckley's counterpart on the other team, organized a week of protests with a culminating mock trial. The students claimed that their rights had been violated because, "the Dogwood Creek Constitution doesn't say anything about teachers having the right to take iPads." The student protesters received administrative permission to create posters and flyers to advertise the protests as well as to invite their fellow students to join them. On the day that students received the flyer, Ms. Buckley recounted how her Homeroom students, who happened to be the students who had been most

enthusiastically involved in her debate activities, responded to the students from the other eighth grade team:

They were like ‘Oh, now you want to protest, but you thought it was a joke when we were trying to protest when somebody’s life was mercilessly taken for them?’ And they’re like, they’re holding a flyer. ‘Why would I support this?’ And I’m just sitting there like they’re making very, very valid points, and I didn’t say a word. I just passed it out.

Through their debate research and preparation on a topic that concerned them, Ms. Buckley’s students found a new platform for expressing their opinions about real-world issues. Although Ms. Buckley did not point to her students’ involvement in the debate as having influenced her students’ perspectives in this situation, the process appeared to expand their citizenship as they looked beyond their own experiences as students to consider larger questions.

Ear Hustling: Enacting the Teacher’s Role

Ms. Buckley was used to playing what she described as her favorite role in the classroom, that of facilitating student learning. As the facilitator, her intention was to monitor student interactions and behavior during group projects while giving students space to work out problems on their own. She explained how she conducted herself in this role:

I am at my desk for some of the time, but I am consistently getting up, walking around, checking in with each group, or if I’m ear hustling, and I hear a conversation like I’ll, I’ll be drawn to that group...

She went on to further explain her approach to “ear hustling” which meant constantly listening in to what students were saying even from her desk as she moved around the room checking in with groups and answering questions. She said of her purpose, “So I really want them to, is that they know I’m here for support, but I really want to see how

much they can do independently, you know, taking the initiative...” She reported listening in on groups for a variety of information and related how she held back from involving herself to see if what she had taught students would come through like a little voice in their heads telling them what to do:

Because even like if I'm sitting at my desk out here, kids will say, ‘I don't know if she'll approve that [source]’ ‘I don't know.’ Like ‘Is this a good website?’ ‘I don't know. You should ask her.’ And I always sit at my desk and I try to act like I don't hear them, but I'm like that's good that they're thinking like, ‘Well, what is she going to say?’

During the final weeks of the year, students were preparing for what Ms. Buckley described as their culminating project for the year, the “Teach-for-a-Day” presentations. Ms. Buckley had been assigning this project for several years, and she viewed it as having many benefits for achieving her goals for student learning. The project required each student group to present 1-2 chapters of new material to their peers as a classroom lesson. Students were provided the learning objectives and chapters to cover in the textbook as well as suggested supplementary material including videos; however, they were given freedom to design the components of the lesson and to act as the teachers of the class that day. Ms. Buckley saw the project as an opportunity for students to reflect on the year and to think back on the different strategies they had engaged in during the year as they made choices for their own lesson for their classmates. While Ms. Buckley felt it was important for students to realize they had free reign over the direction of the project and to be “independent minded,” she also noted that the “pressure is on them” to rise to the occasion and “demonstrate how much they’ve learned, from a leadership standpoint.” She believed this experience was particularly valuable “given they’re so close to being in

high school next year where they really are going to be even more on their own in terms of responsibility for their work.”

Simultaneously, Ms. Buckley also reluctantly assigned a new countywide culminating writing task called the Honors Capstone Project to all of her Honors students. The project required students to “compose a report that discusses/ reflects four key components related to a social issue related to society in the United States.” The key components included an introduction, counterargument, argument, and conclusion offering “your own plan of action to help solve this social issue.” Because time left in the year was running short, Ms. Buckley made the assignment another group project which meant that her Honors students were working on two group projects within their 4-5 member groups at the same time during the final weeks of the school year. In her role as facilitator, she provided daily class time for students to work on the “many moving parts” required of each project, allowing student groups the authority to set their own agendas during a busy and fragmented time of the school year as final field trips, testing, and eighth grade activities interrupted routines and pulled students from classes on an almost daily basis.

Through the debate preparations during the year, Ms. Buckley had been impressed by the ways that students had taken ownership as a team and devised their own methods for collaborating with each other in order to “divide and conquer” their group assignments using their iPads. However, with two major projects going on, it became more challenging for Ms. Buckley to keep tabs on group progress on both assignments as she circulated the room and hallway, where she allowed some groups to spread out, as she listened in and peered over students’ shoulders to see what they were doing.

Exacerbating this complicated scenario, was the impact of the fractured schedule. Ms. Buckley ended up regretting her decision to go forward with having students form groups for the project on one of the days that several students were on a field trip. This created one group in each of Ms. Buckley's classes that she referred to as "the group-by-default." Ms. Buckley remarked of all that was going on, "I can tell that it's overwhelming for some of them, but they know what my expectations are. It's like if you're having a conflict or an issue with somebody, you need to find a way to work it out."

On the day that I visited Ms. Buckley's class for the fourth observation, the students were working on both their Teach-for-a-Day project and Capstone Projects as they saw fit. Ms. Buckley said that she expected to be "in full facilitator mode." She started the class with a quick warm-up with the intention of forcing students to create a structure for their time with "the specific tasks that you and your group have come up with in terms of what your individual responsibility is for today."

Ms. Buckley was using writing-to-learn strategies, as will be discussed further in the next section, for students to set goals and to reflect on their progress, which she had found effective during debate preparations. These short pieces of writing were intended to reveal red flags such as a lack of focus in some of the groups, which would allow Ms. Buckley to interject herself early in the period to redirect her students.

While Ms. Buckley's intention was to foster independence and self-reliance through her stance as a facilitator, as she eavesdropped on groups, she discovered that some groups were meeting her expectations while others were not on track. She described one group that she used as an example for the rest of the class:

It's like, they were really debating about how to proceed. And then for my quick wrap up with the class, you know, I applauded them in front of the whole group.

I'm like, 'you guys, you know, you had your opinions and you were sticking to it. But eventually you guys said, you know, 'me, her, and her, we're going to work on this chapter and you, him, and him, y'all are just gonna work on that chapter and then we'll just merge it.' So, it was like they came to a solution on their own, which is something that was impressive.

It was Ms. Buckley's expectations to see students engaged in "debate" over ideas but also mindful of her directions. As she walked around the room, Ms. Buckley encountered a group that was not talking which was a red flag that they were not coordinating their efforts. This happened particularly with the "groups by default." For example, Ms. Buckley found one student who spent almost the entire period trying to remember his password to access his Kahoot account to make a trivia game. Ms. Buckley's assessment was that the other students in the group were being shortsighted thinking, "'I'm doing what I'm doing, and you all can sit there and struggle if you want to.' But what they don't realize is that is going to come back for the entire group when the whole group is not ready."

With another group, brewing problems went undetected until the end of the period as the students put forward reasonable goals but worked behind the screens of their iPads in clusters at cross-purposes. As Ms. Buckley made her way around the classroom listening to students, she ultimately interjected herself into a discussion with a group that revealed problems in the group's communication as peer collaborators:

Ms. Buckley:	So, you all have a teammate that says you are finished with the questions. So, I am trying to figure out what two questions [you are working on] specifically? So, you will have [chapters] nine and 10. Are all the questions done?
Group:	What? (discussion)
Ms. Buckley:	So, Jeannie and Maria, what can Ashley and Teresa specifically work on?
Jeannie and Maria:	The exit ticket. We've already done the... (group argues)
Teresa:	Can we go to the Media Center?

Ms. Buckley: They're not accepting people right now, so there has to be something else that you could actively work on. Remember, there's your Capstone Project, too.

Teresa: Mine's on feminism and racism, but they don't want that.

Maria: We need something we all can agree on.

Teresa: It's a social issue, right?

Ms. Buckley: Yes.

Teresa: (to Jeannie) Why you looking at me like that?

Ms. Buckley: Alright, is your exit ticket finished?

Jeannie and Maria: Yes.

Ms. Buckley: Your warm-up finished?

Teresa: No, we didn't!

Ms. Buckley: So, you two can work on the warm up. Jeannie, what are you working on? So, you're the only one in the group working on the Capstone Project? I did realize that you all are also a group by default where you didn't necessarily choose each other, but I need you all to work as a unit. Okay? This is not an individual grade. Your research portion for this week, those are individually based but your actual final project, you all are getting the same score. So just because one person is done with their part, that doesn't mean you can't worry about everybody else...

In this scenario, the tension between Ms. Buckley's vision for students to be accountable to each other and to work collaboratively while wanting to provide them freedom to direct their own learning was evident. The result of her decision to allow students to monitor their own progress rather than directly overseeing their writing process had varied results among groups. Ms. Buckley assessed that "collectively as a whole," with the exception of the "group by default" student groups had made progress as she had expected while they were working on their projects. However, by defaulting to her comfortable principles of practice of background monitoring, some student groups did not receive the level of guidance they needed to achieve her high expectations for their final products.

One question related to assessment that continued to surface for Ms. Buckley was how teachers could gauge students' independent growth when students were working in

groups. Her 'divide and conquer' philosophy suggested a priority for accountability for completion of writing as a series of tasks over broader learning goals; however, that these questions surfaced about how to make assessments more accurate suggested that Ms. Buckley was in the process of examining the implications of this practice.

Of the Teach-for-a-Day projects, Ms. Buckley was adamant that she had not sacrificed anything in the process of relinquishing the control of several chapters of her United States History content, including topics related to themes of justice that were very important to her such as slavery, to her students to deliver to their peers as a lesson. With her vision clearly centered on facilitating students' learning through experiential opportunities, she did not hesitate in responding:

I don't think I sacrificed anything. I'm like gauging it based on the type of questions I've been getting. I really think that this is an excellent opportunity for them from what I've been told from certain kids. This is, um, a project they'd never had before or a situation like this before.... And I've had the question today like what's your role going to be while we are teaching? So, it's like they're really like, well, how far can we go with this? Like can I tell a student what to do and do they have to listen to me? And it's like they're really getting into the mode of 'I will be the teacher for this class. I need to think about every aspect of what that actually means.' And to see that from a 14-year old's perspective is really humbling in a lot of different ways.

Ms. Buckley's focus on facilitating students' development over controlling the curricular content was clearly in support of her vision for developing students' confidence and preparation for future challenges. Due to her social action perspective of writing development, she was more inclined to reference growth that she saw in her students' learning dispositions, particularly in their confidence or their willingness to participate in activities which was what she shared about students' engagement in their debate activities and their Teach for a Day projects. She remarked toward the end of the

year of the opportunities she had afforded students to develop their confidence, “I think I’m definitely starting to see the fruits of that labor.”

Seeing What Everyone is Saying: Enacting Student Learning

Ms. Buckley’s new outlook on writing had expanded her vision for student learning beyond her former practice of assigning and evaluating student writing as a product to be corrected. It was Ms. Buckley’s intention to refocus her vision to find new value in writing for other purposes as well. She said:

It’s freed my mind in terms of not being afraid to look at writing in a certain way as opposed to it always being this huge long massive task. It can be little things that you do on a daily basis that can actually make a difference with the kids.

She came to the realization that daily informal writing could play an important role in helping her to accomplish other learning goals. She explained this change in her perspective:

Whether they are giving their opinion, whether they are giving a reflection of something, they are writing in my class every day. So now, I have more of an awareness of what that means when they are, even the things that I say to them, that concept has changed, what I expect for them to come up with, and I’ve even given them the reason as to why I have them complete an assignment whereas before it’s like ‘This is due at the end of the month. If you have questions, let me know.’

Providing students with an explanation of the reasons for writing was a significant change for Ms. Buckley who had not focused on involving students in the writing process in the past. Ms. Buckley felt that she was no longer just assigning writing but consciously engaging students in their own learning process, in line with her expanding vision for student learning.

Giving “glows and grows.” One new type of writing that Ms. Buckley latched onto during the BWP Summer Institute was written public feedback. During the Summer

Institute, teachers were asked to share responses to presenters after each Teacher Inquiry Workshop (TIW) demonstration in a public online format with a two-prong purpose: to provide feedback to presenters and also to capture ideas and “a-has” gleaned from the presentations for the audience of teachers to draw from for future teaching ideas. One specific form of feedback that was shared by a presenting teacher in the institute was a practice that she had developed in her third grade classroom of providing public “glows and grows,” a specific form of constructive peer feedback for the writer on what they had done well and what they could work on in the future to improve the piece of writing. The presenting teacher modeled an online tool called Padlet for this purpose. Ms. Buckley was excited to learn about this tool and make use of it with her students in their one-to-one iPad environment. She explained how she had incorporated “glows and grows” using Padlet as a method for “everyone to see what everyone else is saying” during class presentations.

Overall, Ms. Buckley felt that it was a positive new learning experience for students, giving them a public space “to write their reflection and give immediate peer feedback.” Ms. Buckley shared how she explained this expectation to her students:

I’m like ‘you all are reading feedback and you’re hearing from your peers’ point of view as opposed to just hearing my comments, or my feedback in your grade. I wasn’t the only one watching your presentation. There were 25 other people.’ So, while they were just typing up ‘glows and grows,’ that is still a form of writing, and it’s meant to support and promote accountability.

On the day that I observed two of Ms. Buckley’s student groups delivering their Teach-for-a Day projects to the class, all students were asked to provide “glows and grows” in a public document to the student “teachers” who were delivering the class lesson. Ms. Buckley set up the document ahead of time and invited students to create

their feedback note in the document using their iPads before the group presentation began. The directions on the Padlet stated that “For each presentation share your glows (positive feedback) and grows (suggestions for improvement). You must provide at least one glow and one grow for each presentation.” Ms. Buckley shared that presentations had been running over and so she had started encouraging students to update their “glows and grows” during the presentations using their iPads.

During day four of presentations, four students were teaching the class lesson on The North and The South. Approximately fifteen minutes into the presentation, Ms. Buckley modeled “glows and grows” for the group on the Padlet. For glows, she wrote, “Great job monitoring student activity by circulating the room! Good idea to highlight the text for students to know which information to write down in their notes.” For grows, she wrote, “Slide presentation should have more color and images throughout to in order to enhance your work more. Practice on projecting your voices more throughout the presentation.” At the end of the period, students were instructed to finish their feedback by the end of the day, and student presenters were asked to look over the feedback.

In reflecting on the “glows and grows” feedback the class provided, Ms. Buckley said she was looking for students to be precise. She noted that most of the students met the requirements “as far as being specific” while some were “taking the easy way out.” While reviewing the student comments, she explained how she viewed some students using this writing as a form of self-expression:

Some of them are hitting the mark and then some of them are missing it a bit, um, rather than taking the easy way out. But as far as them expressing themselves, I'm seeing that they're doing so. Like they want to make sure that, how they view the presentation, the way they see it, the way they perceive it is coming across to the group that they're reflecting on, um, which I think is unique as well, rather than saying, ‘Oh, good job, good job.’

She went on to analyze how certain students were able to participate in this type of writing who usually are not as actively engaged in her class. She pointed to one student's response in her on-grade level who included specific feedback that she appreciated as a learning tool. Ms. Buckley commented, "I thought was a good sign from her considering that she kind of tends to just sit back and be in relaxed mode for the majority of the time."

Toward the end of the year, as students had become comfortable with the practice, Ms. Buckley saw students applying feedback they had received in new ways that she had not expected. She saw students internalizing feedback that they had received and being able to apply that feedback to another group's presentation, for example. She concluded:

So, I think I'm seeing a pretty quick turnaround as far as them being able to share out the information that they've recently learned from their peers and then being able to dish it out, if you will, while they're the evaluators watching somebody else have their presentation.

This practice represented a successful public opportunity to bring the classroom community into the writing process using technology. Although technology tools played a role in both concealing problems and unifying Ms. Buckley's classroom as a community, by involving the entire classroom community in the evaluation process, Ms. Buckley created an authentic audience for student projects which influenced the community's common understanding of quality and provided a common frame of reference. Significantly, Ms. Buckley's addition of public writing was consistent with her social action perspective and demonstrated her new beliefs that writing development occurs through building relationships to readers, sharing meaning, and using technology tools to construct voice and identities (Beach et al., 2015).

Reflecting on thinking. Using reflections for the multi-purposes of accountability, self-reflection on learning, and peer evaluation became an ongoing practice of Ms. Buckley's during the year, sometimes using a quick form like Padlet and other times requiring a more extended response in Google Classroom. She explained how she used reflections after students completed the Arming Teachers Debate and how she wanted students to engage in metacognitive practice:

And with their reflections, they had to write one about the [Arming Teachers] debate and I explained to them, 'I want you to think back on what you heard somebody else say. Did it affect you to the point where you decided to say maybe the other side isn't completely wrong?' So, me explaining to them the purpose of certain writing that definitely changed for me this year because of this course.

Looking back on her students' responses, she felt that these reflections gave students time to "really process and think." For the reflection that she assigned on the Arming Teachers Debate, Ms. Buckley also surveyed her students as part of their reflection to find out if the debate had in any way changed students' beliefs on the issue. She reported:

'And I would say on a rough survey that I took, probably about 40% of the kids said they were persuaded to believe the other side than they did initially. Because going into this issue, I think maybe I may have had four kids that were in favor out of the 105 that I teach. They were all like 'Absolutely not, that's a horrible idea' so to go from four kids to like 40% that says, 'My mind is more open to that idea because of this debate because the other team brought up points that I didn't consider or when I was doing research for this debate, I came across some facts that I agreed with.

Additionally, Ms. Buckley used this reflection to ask students to think about their own contribution to the debate preparation and what they had learned from either winning or losing. She explained:

They had to give a reason as to why their team won. And then they had to give their reason if your team lost, why do you think the other team won as opposed to your team winning? So, they had to evaluate their personal role, the role of their

group... So, it gets them to really think about the way they proceeded through that activity and ultimately to see if it had an impact on their thinking.

According to Ms. Buckley, these feedback assignments also created an opportunity for students to reflect on their developing opinions and perspectives. She said, “For them to evaluate how listening to their peers or how work on research that they did caused them to think twice at least about their original position on something, I thought that was huge.” She also noted her support of students who maintained their original position: “...all I care about is you being able to express your experience about this activity.”

Using a new microscope for looking at student writing. Coming out of the BWP, it was Ms. Buckley’s hope that her new mindset about writing would inspire a more intentional use of writing in her classroom to facilitate learning. This new mindset about the role of writing for learning encouraged Ms. Buckley to not only use daily writing activities for new purposes such as goal setting and predicting but also to read students’ writing with a different lens. For example, Ms. Buckley shared that she found herself reading students’ writing as a formative assessment strategy. She stated of her new understanding of how writing could serve this purpose: “...as far as just regular day-to-day assignments, or even like with these debate activities specifically, I felt as though it helps me appreciate where my students were and where they were trying to be...” She stated:

I know, me personally, I actually, I paid more specific attention to their writing this year as opposed to, I guess like you kind of get used to grammatical errors and them not answering all parts of the question. ‘Okay, I’m docking points here. I’m docking points here,’ but like this year, I really kind of looked at what they were saying in their writing where they, as opposed to me getting distracted by grammatical errors, because I actually really looked at their answers thoroughly to see where their opinions were being based on, what facts they were using, what evidence were they really using and why did they, why did this piece of evidence stand out to this child? Um, so for me giving certain types of assignments, my

approach, my overview, gave me a better understanding as to the way that my students are.

This was a significant discovery for Ms. Buckley who concluded that writing provided her with valuable information about her students' learning because she was not as fixated on reading their writing with the intention of simply penalizing students for grammar and spelling errors as her focus. Admittedly, she could still be irritated by careless errors; however, she felt that she had widened her view of what to look for as she read student work. At the conclusion of the year, her views of students' challenges as writers were still primarily focused on students' grammatical errors that appeared in the daily work they produced using their iPads. In contrast, her beliefs about how she could help students improve through connecting to their interests and providing them freedom to express themselves suggested that she was reaching for that "new microscope" and a more positive attitude. These new beliefs about facilitating students' growth and improvement were also reflective of her theoretical perspective of writing development.

Although the Capstone Honors Project could have been the culminating triumph for all the work that Ms. Buckley had put into her inquiry focus during the school year, she did not view it that way, citing many complicating factors that impacted the final reports. Pushing forward with the Teach-for-a-Day Project along with the Capstone Project with all of the end of the year activities disrupting preparations, resulted in compounding of required and overlapping projects which caused strain on her students. Students also received a rushed version of the content delivered by their peers, including chapters that covered slavery and the Civil War. Ms. Buckley recognized the problem with the outcome but did not see the emphasis on the Teach-for-a-Day projects as resulting in a tradeoff, nor did she recognize the need for examining overlapping goals

between these projects for opportunities to adjust. In general, her focus on the development of learning dispositions remained out of balance with her content.

As she looked over the final group reports, she remarked, “Like some of them excelled and then others like crashed and burned.” Ms. Buckley saw the potential of the assignment to reinforce important concepts and had already thought about how she would make more time next year “perhaps in the second half of the school year where they can really start zeroing in on, perhaps working on this piece by piece” to avoid the last minute rush the students had experienced. While Ms. Buckley was happy to see that students selected “unique” topics, she could have also been proud of how her students had not shied away from choosing complicated social issues, many touching on themes of justice that were clearly connected to Ms. Buckley’s curricular vision. For example, one group selected, “Cultural Appropriation: Wrong or Right?” Another group focused on “Americans Under the Poverty Line,” their cover page featuring a protest to “End Poverty Now.” Some groups chose a topical issue of personal interest, such as one group’s focus on Net Neutrality. Many groups chose to focus on issues of discrimination, including discrimination against immigrants, minorities, and women, which were all themes of justice that Ms. Buckley had emphasized during the year. While Ms. Buckley could have also taken great pride in students’ command of argument and counterargument that they had honed during their work on debate preparation and which was evident in their responses, she instead focused on specific structural flaws. She said, “They’re missing topic sentences. They’re missing explaining the quote as to why it supports their counter argument or supports their argument.” Ms. Buckley might have also pointed to the way that students utilized these papers to share their honest opinions.

She also could have remarked on how they went beyond the requirements and took initiative to craft thoughtful interview questions to collect first-hand accounts about sensitive subjects: police brutality, experiences with racism, or attitudes about immigration policy from their teachers and peers, which was in keeping with Ms. Buckley's vision for student learning as an opportunity to "rise to the occasion." Quotations from these interviews added a human touch to their collection of evidence.

Ms. Buckley tipped the balance toward student independence which left some of the groups lacking the guidance to complete both projects successfully. As she re-envisioned what she would do differently, Ms. Buckley remarked that she wished students had engaged in workshop groups, "similar to what we had at the Writers' Project where they had a chance for each other to look at what they put together." She went on to say, "I think they would have been able to at least tighten up on some of the silly errors that I came across."

Although Ms. Buckley concluded that she "definitely had a different microscope looking at their writing this year," she also recognized that shifting her mindset was in the developing stages. Students' errors still bothered her, she admitted. She said, of one of the student groups reports, by way of example, "Because even like last night, like looking at their reports, and I'm like, "Ah! How do you start off your whole entire thing with a lowercase letter?" She went on, "Like half of their group is going to be in an IB program next year..."

Not Speaking Social Studies: Enacting Professional Learning and Growth

Ms. Buckley came out of her involvement in the BWP institute with a vision for collegial professional development where teachers had time and opportunity to teach

each other and share best practices. She was looking forward to sharing her professional development workshop that she had developed during the spring semester course of the BWP with the teachers at her school, especially her Social Studies colleagues whom she had learned a lot from over the years. At the conclusion of the study focus group interview, Ms. Buckley shared counter-examples to her vision that had occurred that school year as she clarified how her vision for professional learning had been constrained during the year by administrative mandates. Illustrating this point, Ms. Buckley reported that a mandated protocol for discussing standardized testing data had superseded her plans for leading professional learning and development within her Social Studies department. She explained how she felt about how she had enacted her role as co-leader of the department which she shared with her principal at her end of the year conference:

I don't feel like I was speaking Social Studies this year. I was speaking Datawise and that is not, that is not our role. Like we thrive as a department, like there's so many people with valuable history lessons and different ideas that we share with each other, and it's like we rarely had that this year, which was a first since I've been here because all of our meetings were dictated around Datawise.

She further reported that teachers had been “stretched so much” that year that professional learning had been pushed to the back burner. Meeting agendas were structured “by the book, like ‘This is happening like this. We’re not diverging away from it’ even if it was like something dire.” She also recalled how working with colleagues had been more collaborative at her school in the past:

But, I remember when it was not like that and everyone was willing to get together and say, ‘Oh, you know, tell me more about this and, you know, I'll try and see if it'll work with the type of students that I have or you know, is there a way I can modify this for my set?’ Or, you know, it was more like that. And it kind of has just been filtering out for the past couple of years. And I think because we're being asked to do so much more, and I know, like again this year, we were told a lot of things in terms of ‘You need to do this and you need to do that.’

As a result, Ms. Buckley found professional learning with her team to be so difficult that she ended up presenting her final TIW with another teacher from the BWP at a different school rather than to her own Social Studies department where she served as an instructional leader. She explained her thinking:

So then when it comes to you wanting to implement a PD, which is how I ended up combining with Ms. Leslie and doing it at her school, because the way they did our schedule this year: 1) I wasn't even seeing my own department when I needed to, 2) When there were meetings, they were all again dictated in terms of how it needed to be, and I didn't want to force people to stay after school, or say, 'Hey, I'm having this after school' and then like one person show up because people like to fly off the parking lot.

Although she was proud of the work that she had accomplished during the year, Ms. Buckley concluded, "But I feel like as far as us really growing, because we weren't allowed to have the freedom to collaborate the way that we were accustomed to, it really took away from us being able to learn."

Summary

Ms. Buckley engaged in an iterative process of adding debate-style activities as well as writing to learn opportunities during the course of the school year to enact her vision for bringing a new more positive attitude toward writing into her classroom that would build students writing through their verbal abilities. She took small steps gradually building her students toward a formal debate on Arming Teachers, a real-world topic that was of concern to them and a big part of the national conversation. Students took on the challenge of coordinating arguments and collecting evidence as a team with Ms. Buckley facilitating the writing process. Through extending opportunities for students to direct their own learning experiences, Ms. Buckley's students took initiative

to devise their own innovative approaches to working collaboratively using online tools and surpassed Ms. Buckley's requirements by going outside of the classroom to interview teachers and staff members to bolster their debate arguments. By adding on these debate activities during the year, Ms. Buckley found students more willing to write. Although time was tight at the end of the year, Ms. Buckley was determined for her students to experience the culmination of her class with her Teach-for-a-Day project which represented her strong vision for student learning. With the addition of the Capstone Project added to students' plates, Ms. Buckley found herself dissatisfied with the final products that the students produced, and her focus on students' errors caused her to miss key evidence of growth in students' final projects. Ms. Buckley was also disappointed with not having an opportunity to deliver her TIW at her own school. She did, however, stand up for her team at her end of the year conference with her principal to advocate for better communication and more time for collaboration and professional learning.

CHAPTER 6: THE CASE OF MS. MARIE MARTIN

Ms. Marie Martin was a sixth-grade and eighth-grade English Language Arts teacher at Birch Ridge Middle School. Although a veteran teacher of more than twenty years, 2017-2018 was her first year at BRMS. Having taught for her first ten years in the Midwest, she had taught for the past eleven years in the Maple Grove Public School System. During the course of her career, Ms. Martin had mostly taught on-grade level middle school Reading and English classes except for a few years when she taught in an alternative program in another state. When she moved to MGPSS, she was placed in a middle school and has been a middle school teacher ever since. She said:

I think in life you just have an area of your life that you're always going into. And it's just followed me my whole life. I wanted to do high school, but the middle school just continues to pull on me, and I just stay there. Yeah, twenty-one years in middle school. But I just say, life just sort of, the boat is just floating, it's just floating. That's all. It's just floating in that area.

Not only did Ms. Martin not set out to teach middle school, like the other teachers in this study, Ms. Martin did not set out to become a teacher. She started her undergraduate studies as a piano performance major but left college before graduating. After some significant life changes, she decided to return to college to finish her degree. At that time, she decided to change her major so that she could become a forensics and debate coach. She recounted how she went to register for courses only to discover at the admissions office that she could not major in forensics and debate coaching but needed to select a content area for her major. She recalled that moment:

I'm like 'I don't want to teach a subject.' 'Well, if you want to become a forensics and debate coach, you have to pick a subject.' Math was out of the question. Social Studies wasn't it. And science was - I'm not a left-brain person. And I just simply said, 'I'll try English,' and that's how I became an English teacher.

Ms. Martin readily admitted that English was not one of her strong subjects in school, and being an English major was challenging for her; however, she found her strengths in literary interpretation and analysis. She recalled, "...we did not have one grammar [course] but lots of great literature, children's literature, women's literature, the analysis of all those things was just... I loved it." Of the preparation she received to teach writing, Ms. Martin shared that being in the BWP Program was "the first time ever in 21 years and then take those four years of my bachelor's degree, 26 years, of actually being taught how to teach students writing, which I've never thought about before."

Birch Ridge Middle School was located in a residential area in a small suburban town. The population of the school was approximately 700 students of which close to 80% are Black/ African American and 18% are Hispanic/ Latino with less than 1% Asian and 1% White. At BRMS, 57% of students received free or reduced meals. Although the 2107-2018 school year was Ms. Martin's first year teaching at the school, Ms. Martin had strong positive feelings about it. She said, "I love this school. I love the students. It's my first year there, and I'm glad.... I always said to myself I would never transfer and still be a teacher." Ms. Martin described that she was "pulled in" by a former Vice Principal to join the staff "and as soon as I came, she received a principalship at an elementary school, and I didn't even get a chance to work with her. But she knew I'd be a good fit there, and I'm so happy."

Ms. Martin noted that the school environment at BRMS was a positive one for her and that she appreciated the professionalism of her colleagues, the staff, and the administration. In particular, she spoke about the tone of professional respect set by the principal, who was in her first year as the top administrator. She said,

My principal sat down, and this is how great she is. She actually sat in my classroom last week. And she does this periodically: ‘How am I doing?’ And she wants an honest answer. ‘How am I doing? What issues do you have with me? What's going great? What's not going great?’ And she has these honest - and I'm very candid with her, and I let her know last week when she sat down during my planning to ask me that, I said, ‘You allow us to be professionals, and I said, ‘That's rare. You don't get that a lot.’

Ms. Martin was assigned three sections of on-grade level eighth-grade classes and one on-grade level sixth-grade class during the 2017-2018 school year. Having mostly taught seventh grade during her career, this was the first time she had been assigned to teach eighth grade in more than ten years.

Upon entering Ms. Martin’s room, student work was displayed on brightly colored paper and on bulletin boards bordered with book-themed trim. On the front bulletin board, student journal entries on colorful notecards were displayed under the titles “Speak Up” and “Stay Silent;” while at the back of the classroom, several group consensus placemat activities from earlier in the year were stapled to the bulletin board. Colorful literary posters also adorned the walls alongside classroom rules, cellphone policy, and directions for unlocking the writing prompt. A white-board stood at the front of the room displaying the daily agenda and objective, Common Core Standard to be covered, guiding question for the unit, and homework assignment. Seven tables of student desks were arranged in clusters of four to seat the approximately 30 students that were in each of Ms. Martin’s classes with space at the back of the room for storage of a Chrome cart of laptops and other classroom materials.

As the announcements came on at the beginning of first period, Ms. Martin could be seen gently shooing students to class from the noisy bustling activity of students clustered in the hallway. As students came bounding into the room, Ms. Martin reminded

students to take off their hoodies and to put their food away. A series of announcements from the front office about testing could barely be heard above the sound of student voices. Ms. Martin, who described her style “as very free range,” and her students as “not the sit down, be quiet” kind, entered the classroom after the bell, still motioning to several students to find their seats as she greeted her students with a friendly, “Good morning, family.”

Ms. Martin’s Vision

So, I think I’m trying to put, dot my i’s and cross my t’s with what’s next. What is that next step? And what are you prepared for? So, the Writing Project came in handy for this life quest I’m on to figure out my purpose and yet get me back in school because I loved it. I loved school so much.

Looking for What’s Next: A Vision for Professional Learning and Growth

Ms. Martin described herself as “such a teacher’s pet,” someone who loved school, loved being a student, and had a lifelong love of learning and value for education instilled in her by her family. She described her vision for learning as being inspired by like-minded people across many areas of interest. Describing herself as an “input-output person,” her vision for learning could be best described as remaining open to possibility of how to put her creativity to use; she found herself influenced by everything going on around her and described herself as impressionable.

Ms. Martin’s vision for professional growth in practice was tied to her own personal quest for a sense of purpose and fulfillment at a transitional stage of life. At the time that she came to join the BWP, she reported that she had been thinking to herself, now that her children were grown and no longer requiring daily care from her, “What am I going to do next?” She described the BWP as an opportunity to consider this question while she tested her own readiness and interest in returning to school. In addition to Ms.

Martin's vision, in general, for the learning and the creative process, itself, she developed a specific vision for learning that would enhance classroom practice coming out of her experience with the BWP. She explained her interest in being around "minds that have the latest techniques, latest authors" as well as current research methods. She also envisioned collegial sharing of relevant ideas from other teachers who had a desire to share rather than administrators directing the professional development experience. Her vision included time and space where "we get to share writing, we actually get to share ideas, we actually get to share strategies without the (sighs)." Although she spoke positively about her colleagues, this collegiality around learning was something that she had found lacking within her own school where the professional learning was limited to data discussions and to reminders rather than topics that were more substantial. She stated of her colleagues, "We're too busy complaining about students. We're too busy complaining about administration and too busy complaining about the work environment. And to be honest with you, you do not want to see those people after three or four or five each day."

Ms. Martin gave credit to the BWP institute with expanding her vision for professional learning for her practice through her engagement in teacher inquiry and specifically through the process of developing her teacher inquiry workshop (TIW). She stated of her renewed interest in inquiry and research:

And to be a researcher in the classroom, I just never. I would have been doing that had I known it really existed. I didn't know you could be your own researcher in the classroom. Now I have the tools to do that, so I will definitely continue on in that regard.

She went on to clarify that she saw classroom inquiry as something that she could see

herself doing “forever.” A “researcher at heart,” Ms. Martin found that being in the program, “kindled that fire. It got me excited about school and got me to figure out what I want to do now.”

Tied to her interest in teacher inquiry and research, Ms. Martin shared during our first interview her vision for being in this study, which was not a question that I asked of the teacher participants but which she returned to several times as it related to her own vision for her professional growth as well as how she hoped to be accountable to her vision for her future teaching that year. She shared an internal dialogue that showed the process she went through as she considered whether or not it would keep her more engaged as the year came to a close. She described how she considered her options: “...[A]s far as taking you on board, I said, ‘If I do this with you, it will help... it will force me to be more organized.’” She elaborated that she also hoped it would encourage her to adopt some new patterns at the end of the year. She related, “It will force me to be more reflective for the last quarter instead of being just like okay, this is the last quarter, let's just sail through.” She also described silencing a dissenting voice in her head, “I said, ‘Nope, I need a little bit more structure.’ And so, you are like my accountability partner.”

In terms of her long-range vision for her professional growth, Ms. Martin shared that she aspired to take on a mentor-teacher position in the school system; however, she was “pretty sure that [she would] definitely be back to the school” in the fall. Participating in the study, she felt, would help her to continue to work on her inquiry focus area, and “everything we are going to learn from this particular experience,” she said. She went on to proclaim, “That’s what I’ll call it, ‘the experience.’” She concluded

by articulating a final vision for professional growth, “I’m like, I want to end strong and not end like I’m just sort of skating through...That’s why I decided to take you.”

Keep Them; Touch Them: A Vision for the Teacher’s Role

Ms. Martin credited an influential education professor with instilling in her a vision for her role in the classroom over twenty years ago that she still embraced: “Do the best job you can keeping those kids inside of class. I don’t care how they’re acting, keep them inside the classroom. Touch them. Let them learn.” This concept of “touching students” is one that surfaced in different ways as Ms. Martin describes her “not traditional” vision for her role. In one sense, touching students meant tolerating behavior that other teachers and administrators might not tolerate. She explained, “If you walk into my classroom, you will get a headache at first, but once you see after a few weeks that the kids are actually learning, you’ll be a little surprised like ‘it was just chaotic in there.’” She shared that over the years her administrators have admonished her for not calling them in earlier for help or alerting them to an issue she was having with a student. She shared a recent example to illustrate this point, “My Vice Principal, just last month, I had like notes on the student for two months, and he was like ‘Why didn’t you tell me this two months ago when we could’ve gotten this done two months ago?’ But I’m just like give them a chance, give them a chance, give them a chance.”

Ms. Martin also envisioned “touching” her students to mean seeing them as individuals and providing them with an audience willing to listen to their not yet developed voices. She explained that she saw her role as striving to really hear and understand students’ ideas, even when those ideas may not be communicated clearly. She referred to her own experiences struggling to write in a structured way as making her “a

lot more sensitive to the person who is writing and not so critical as a teacher.” She described how she wanted to affirm students’ efforts and acknowledge what their work meant to them. For example, she described:

I'm always, I'm looking for a word that's more than ‘amazed.’ Maybe ‘befuddled.’ I don't know the word I'm looking for. When students claim I lost their paper and I'm taking 15, 20 minutes to find that paper and it's literally five words on the page, but it's five words it took them a long time to inch out, as I told you, it does for me. I think sometimes as writers we’ve scrambled over one word, that perfect word, and it takes us time to get to that one perfect word that will flow in the sentence. So, um, I think I'm just a lot more sensitive.

For Ms. Martin, being sensitive to student work also meant being willing to look past grammatical issues in order to attend to students’ intentions and unique voices. She said:

Because I don't know where, probably in college I heard that word ‘voice.’ I was probably taught that a million times: their voice, their voice, their voice, their voice. Dr. Knox, I am sure taught, said that to me a million times. So, I'm trying to find their voice and not necessarily the grammar, not necessarily the sentence structure.

Ms. Martin described this as an active pursuit, like embarking on an expedition within students’ thought processes aimed at unearthing hidden gems that might otherwise be buried or lost. She explained, “I'm trying to see what you are really saying underneath all of this quote, unquote crappy writing.” She went on to clarify how she hoped to improve in her role as a teacher of writing. She said, “So, to continue to hone in on that voice and to see that voice in a structured way as far as writing is concerned. That’s definitely my vision.”

Ms. Martin also had come to view her role as one of translator and clarifier of the curriculum which was a practical vision that had surfaced out of her experience shepherding students through required writing and reading tasks that had been

challenging for her students. She shared that the expectations of her for teaching writing in the Midwest had been to spend two to three months working with students on the steps in the process of crafting an essay, while in her current school district, there was no such structured approach in place. This missing emphasis on teaching composition as a step-by-step process had shaped her thinking about her role, which will be discussed further as it related to her curricular vision. She said, “Right now it feels all confused, and I think my vision is to sort of lessen the confusion for my students.” She went on to elaborate that she saw her role as

to figure out how I can make it easier for them so that when they do have a writing that asks them to do a certain thing that automatically they can do it on their own instead of showing me this sheet of paper and going, ‘How do I start it?’

She explained that the level of difficulty students experienced, including the countywide required literacy task, she believed was due to insufficient practice and skill development to meet the expectations. She concluded that she envisioned her role as “making the curriculum easier for my students” so that they struggled less with how to approach such tasks. She went on to explain, “...because I have a lot of times looked at them and [gone], ‘Am I confusing you?’ Because I’m literally confusing myself sometimes when I look at [the literacy task].” The struggle to resolve what Ms. Martin saw as “confusion” within the District’s expectation of student writing and her own goals for students to be independent was a key conflict that she frequently referenced and that informed how she positioned herself in the classroom in relation to her students and to the curriculum.

Think for Yourself: A Vision for Student Learning

Ms. Martin's dominant concern for student learning at the time of the study was grounded in her belief that her students depended too much on her and on each other instead of having the capacity to bring forward their own original ideas. This critique seemed laser-focused on her eighth-grade students and appeared to have developed out of the daily struggles Ms. Martin was experiencing in the classroom with writing tasks. Much of Ms. Martin's vision for students being self-reliant was based on what she saw as an unhealthy co-dependency. She stated her belief:

We have not given them the tools to be able to collaborate and share ideas like we do as adults...so now I have students in my classroom who have been collaborating for so long they cannot, they literally have anxiety attacks when you try to separate them because they depend on that person to do their work each class.

When describing her vision for student learning in this example, Ms. Martin's priority for self-reliance was a goal that was in service to her own personal needs for students to not be so dependent on her as much as it was in service to student learning. In making decisions in her classroom, Ms. Martin's orientation was what I came to describe as "immediate-concerns forward." Her own immediate concerns about her students' behavior, their anxiety, and their tendency to copy each other's answers motivated her actions more so than a specific vision that she held for student learning. While she wanted students to be less clingy, she did not have an actionable vision beyond separating students from each other for how to involve students in developing their own independence as learners and writers.

Ms. Martin did, however, have a vision for sharing the classroom space and creating a classroom culture by sharing power with her students. She stated, "My

classroom is their classroom, and as long as we respect, we're good." She went on to describe what sharing the space in her classroom would like. She said, "You will see them change the date...you will see them ask to teach. I allow them to teach the class." Ms. Martin's vision for sharing power with students reflected culturally relevant teaching practices and a commitment to reaching minority students that included her vision of allowing students to assume the role of the teacher (Ladson Billings, 1995b).

Although Ms. Martin seemed comfortable while describing this power dynamic, she used terms such as "chaotic" and "loud" with students "rolling around the room" which further revealed her focus on immediate concerns in her classroom over striving for a vision. She stated, "I just roll with the flow."

Being Successful as a Real Writer: A Vision of Learning for the 21st Century

Ms. Martin had a broad vision for connecting the classroom to 21st society which was focused on students being prepared to move beyond her classroom into future academic settings. Within this dimension of her vision, Ms. Martin struggled to reconcile how to successfully teach the curriculum and perform the functions of her job while simultaneously attending to what she believed students would actually need to be successful writers, which was described in very broad terms. Although she didn't have a fully articulated vision for what she wanted to do to address this dilemma, she expressed how it caused tension for her as she struggled with the big question of her purpose and role as a teacher for preparing students to be able to utilize what they had learned in their lives. She described this conflict:

I don't even know. I don't even know where to go because I'm really trying to teach you to be successful at the curriculum but not necessarily as a writer. You see what I'm saying? That's not what my job, what I feel my job is, and that's not what's going to help you in ninth grade, 10th grade, 11th grade. It's going to help

me at this particular time to be able to sit down with my principal at the end of the school year to tell them that I did what I'm supposed to do. Now did you give me the wonderful rating that I deserve?

Ms. Martin frequently described a dilemma over how fulfilling her job function was in opposition to what she believed students needed to be prepared for what lay ahead. She emphasized:

There's no way they're going to go to high school next year, I know my students, and to be able to receive maybe a comparison-contrast essay and fluidly write that or an essay that has to deal with focusing on this particular idea of importance and then to be able to do it.

This concern informed her broad vision for preparing students for the 21st Century.

However, she struggled to imagine what prescriptive approaches might work to provide the structure students needed to be ready for these imagined future writing tasks, such as comparison essays, while simultaneously holding onto her vision for engaging students in writing that was authentic.

In general, Ms. Martin wanted students to be prepared for the academic expectations they would face after middle school, and she saw providing them with authentic ways to develop as readers and writers that existed in the world beyond the world of middle school English Language Arts class as a central to that vision. The tension in this expectation was also present in how she viewed the role of the curriculum.

Climbing Outside the Box: A Curricular Vision

Ms. Martin's curricular vision, as has already been touched upon, was informed more by what she didn't think was valuable in the curriculum guide than it was by the specific content that she wanted to emphasize. Across all dimensions of Ms. Martin's vision, she looked for ways to clear blocks of "confusion" that she felt hampered students

from being able to express their authentic voices as well as being receptive to learning experiences. The curriculum, in particular, was something that Ms. Martin viewed as interfering with her vision for her ideal role in helping students to develop as writers. She also saw the curriculum as confounding students' ability to be self-reliant when they were confronted with writing tasks that they did not know how to approach.

Ms. Martin often described herself as a creative person who paid attention to the “musicality of writing” more so than the structure. In her ideal curriculum, Ms. Martin wanted to “see more of that impromptu writing” taking place with the content and as a way of bringing more of her own interest in being creative to the classroom writing students were engaged in. Additionally, related to her vision for listening for students' voices, Ms. Martin envisioned engaging students with content in a way “where we are doing something in class that makes them genuinely want to write, that makes them want to have me hear their voice.” While she admitted that she herself needed more structure from the curriculum to help her improve her writing instruction, “the curriculum structures [the students] so much, that they don't feel that they can go outside of that box right now, as far as the curriculum is concerned, and the way their essays are set up.”

Although she envisioned students having more freedom within the curricular content, Ms. Martin deferred to the curriculum as an authority. She often personified the curriculum guide when talking about planning her lessons. For example, she shared that the literacy task students had completed in recent weeks required a thesis statement, “but the curriculum didn't necessarily teach me how to teach them to write a thesis...we have a body and conclusion, but we haven't really honed in on that.” This was very different from what she had experienced during her time teaching in the Midwest where the state

examination required students to demonstrate their knowledge of the writing process, not simply submit a final product for assessment. She explained this difference, “They had to show their brainstorm. They had to write a rough draft. They had to edit the rough draft, and then do the final copy.” As Ms. Martin thought about what she wanted out of the current curriculum, she envisioned what would happen if she were “to write the perfect writing book.” She shared that in her book there would be explicit instructions for different essay writing tasks. She also related how she had been wishing that week that she could have the “perfect outline or graphic organizer” to give to students that would provide this type of support and structure for them to capture the “input” from the text and build them toward “where you can actually be independent with your learning and not necessarily depend on me for every single step of the way.”

The lack of emphasis on writing process in the curriculum and lack of teaching tools for the required elements of the writing assessments bewildered Ms. Martin. While she wished for “perfect” tools for students to structure their writing, she did not have a vision for how she could develop the tools or make modifications to effectively address her critique of the curriculum.

Vision for Inquiry: Consensus Mapping in 8 RELA

As a Reading English Language Arts (RELA) teacher for more than 20 years, Ms. Martin came to the BWP Summer Institute feeling a range of unsettled emotions associated with the responsibility of teaching writing to middle schoolers. In her application materials, Ms. Martin shared her belief that “writing is a layered process. It is one of those areas in my 20 plus years of teaching in which my anxiety level goes from a 0 to 3 and back to 0 as I usher students through the five steps of the writing process.”

Early in the process, Ms. Martin found the tasks manageable; however, the struggle came as Ms. Martin reached the step in the process at which students were to develop their own narrowed focus and thesis for their essay. She described this as “the biggest hurdle” during the district literacy task:

I found myself frustrated as they fought through the thesis and writing the body of their essay because a lot of my thinking became their thinking. A lot of prompting from the curriculum became a part of their essay. It saddened me that at the end of the five-day lesson, the final product for my middle school students was an essay that wasn't entirely authentic. I was successful as a teacher because I met a deadline, but in the process, I robbed my students of their authenticity.

Ms. Martin frequently shared her inner struggle of how to be a successful teacher of writing on her own terms, as she shared in this application description. The dilemma of how she had accomplished the curricular goal by meeting the deadline but had failed to help students develop an authentic voice in their written product was one that persisted as she considered how she could improve her practice. She stated one brief goal on her BWP application materials for how she might address this struggle through adjusting her own approach to student writing in the classroom, “Through my participation in the invitational institute, my goal is to develop the ability to read my students’ writing in order to tune in to their voice and hone it so that their writing is communicated clearly.” Although this desire for authenticity was clearly connected to Ms. Martin’s vision for refining her role, her vision for creating authentic experiences and engaging students as independent thinkers was not an articulated facet of her vision. Her interest in hearing her students’ voices provided guiding focus to her process as she interrogated her ideas for her inquiry focus during the BWP Institute.

Instrumental to Ms. Martin’s selection of her inquiry area was one of the Teacher Inquiry Workshops (TIW) presented during the Summer Institute, “The Kind of Talk

Writing Needs” which she said “reignited [her] interest in the topic of consensus mapping.” In her initial proposal for developing her inquiry focus area that she submitted at the end of the Summer Institute, she stated that during the TIW presentation, she learned “so much more of what exactly *accountable talk* is and how it looks in the classroom.” Before that presentation, Ms. Martin said that her understanding of *accountable talk* stopped at the point of having students insert sentence “stems” into the classroom conversation. She explained that during the TIW, the teacher presenter shared an “Academic Language Function Toolkit” which broadened her thinking about activating language for classroom discussion. She stated:

Being able to see how the function of language changes based on the language tasks showed me that there are many ways students can enhance their academic language in various settings. My students have been used to using a one-page photocopy of unclassified stems to say in class to make them sound intellectual. The handbook showed me how to use the stems with purpose.

Ms. Martin went on to share her vision for how using consensus mapping in the classroom would work “hand in hand” with the ideas presented in “The Kind of Talk Writing Needs.” She related her theory that for students to be able to map their thinking, talking and communicating to each other were necessary elements. She concluded with her hope: “If the correct language can be crafted during the communication process, then thinking will be enhanced.”

In her own TIW Proposal, Ms. Martin refined her focus on consensus mapping which she defined as

a decision-making process that allows groups to come together in order to share their ideas and thoughts on a particular idea or issue. Using maps to track the thought process in the classroom allows teachers to observe the following in a collaborative group setting: students’ thinking, listening, including, sharing, and agreeing.

In the rationale for her choice, Ms. Martin reported that she had been introduced to consensus mapping, using consensus placemats as the strategy, during the prior school year for the first time. She stated that it was a tool briefly presented in the curriculum but easily glossed over. The curricular instructions were to use the placemat “to get students to respond to higher-level questions while working in collaborative groups.” She further offered another critique of the curriculum because it “did not go into any explanation what consensus decision-making is or how to successfully use the consensus map as a tool for discussion.” Although she was pleased with the outcome of her first attempt utilizing it with her students, Ms. Martin felt that there were adjustments that could be made to make the experience more interactive for critical thinking and that allowed her to utilize her creativity.

Ms. Martin described herself as having been “in a rut” when it came to engaging students in collaborative discussion. For 20 years, she stated, “I simply posed one question as a whole to multiple groups and had them talk about the answer. There was no structure to the way I ran collaborative conversations in the past.” Looking toward the new school year from a place of reflection and optimism, Ms. Martin envisioned using the consensus placemat as tool that would “structure the group conversation and craft thinking.” Ms. Martin posed the following questions to guide her inquiry focus: “What kinds of questions get students to delve deeper into the inquiry process? What types of discussion techniques can be used to enhance collaborative conversation? How can students successfully incorporate their thinking shown on the consensus map into their writing?” She theorized, “If conscientious thinking can be mapped out, it can also be mirrored in the students’ writing.”

Summary

After attending the BWP Summer Institute, Ms. Martin had a renewed passion for research and had made a commitment to participating in this research study as a learning opportunity and “accountability partner[ship]” for ending the year on strong note. She set out with the intention of fine-tuning her role in the classroom to maximize her own strengths as a teacher of writing who had a musical ear for “listening” to what students were really trying to say in order to “hone in” on student voice. She believed that her students were too dependent on each other and on her for their writing ideas which she found “maddening,” and she theorized that using the consensus placemat strategy purposefully, among other Accountable Talk approaches as her inquiry focus, would serve to activate students’ original ideas. She reasoned that through discussion, students would deepen those ideas for writing. This focus area brought together the many facets of her vision for activating, tuning, and refining student voice for authentic writing. While Ms. Martin held a broad hope for her students to develop independence, she did not have an actionable vision for student ownership of formal writing tasks. Ms. Martin had been struggling to reconcile her own vision of writing which she described as free and “out of the box” with the vision of writing that was presented in the curriculum guide which she felt was too restrictive. Instead of just “wading through the next thing,” she wanted to become a stronger teacher of writing and to find or develop curricular tools that would help her clear away the confusion and remove the roadblocks that she felt prevented her students from being self-reliant writers prepared for future academic challenges. She was concerned, however, how she would enact these visions during the school year while she was “in the middle of the water.”

Ms. Martin's Vision Enacted

With an eye toward creating her Teacher Inquiry Workshop (TIW), Ms. Martin expanded her inquiry focus as the school year began. Ms. Martin had left the Summer Institute with her plan of modifying and utilizing the consensus placemat that she found in the curriculum guide; however, during the fall, she made changes to her plan based on advice she received from members of her BWP coaching group including her coach that resulted in a shifting plan for her inquiry focus and the development of her TIW.

A Shifting Research Plan for Collaborative Discussion in 8 RELA

Ms. Martin developed a new aim for her inquiry focus which was to “create a grab bag of low prep strategies that can be used on a daily basis that are meaningful, helpful, and strengthens students’ thinking, reasoning, and writing.” In the Research Plan that she submitted on November 1, 2018, she modified her research questions to more broadly consider “discussion strategies” and had removed the language of “enhancing writing” that was included in her original question. This was significant in that all the teachers in the Summer Institute had been coached to select an inquiry focus that was related to improving writing instruction. When I discussed with Ms. Martin how she had changed her focus, she explained a series of events that led her away from the consensus placemat to the grab bag idea and then back to her original focus on the consensus placemat. She recalled

I don't think the advisor heard me all the way through. And so, when I told her about the consensus placemat, uh, it wasn't dismissed, but it was sort of, not like it was enough. So, it's like, ‘Oh, you need more, you need more, you, that's, that's too little. You need more, you need to do Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah. But I don't think she understood my full concept. So, I went back and said, ‘Well, what can I do that's more?’ so then I said, ‘Okay, what about a grab bag?’ So, I wanted to create basically a workshop with like a book or something with tons and tons of

things that you could do as a grab bag to enhance right here (pointing to plan), your daily classroom conversation.

As Ms. Martin went forward with her new inquiry focus in the fall, she researched different tools for her grab bag for classroom conversation and shared this new plan with another leadership team coach who asked her what happened to her original plan. When Ms. Martin explained how she had changed her focus:

She was like, this is too much right here. This is, this will take you forever, you know, to actually complete to the way you want to. She was like, if you just go back, she said, I loved it so much. If you just go back to the consensus placemat and start exactly where you want, then you do that.

Ms. Martin explained that there was no time to adjust the written copy of her research plan before the deadline of November 1, and although she felt she'd received some bad advice and lost time, she was glad for the intervention. She recalled, that then "[I] changed up. That's what happened. But I, I changed back to my original plan."

Ms. Martin's explanation of how she changed her inquiry focus and then changed it back again was another indicator of how she was focused on immediate concerns for her workshop over reaching for a vision for improving writing instruction.

Although Ms. Martin's Research Plan did not accurately reflect her research questions because of this change in focus, the steps that she took toward her goal of being a researcher in her own classroom and for engaging stakeholders early in the year to prepare a professional development presentation for teachers remained the same. Ms. Martin's plan emphasized various types of research, which is what she said excited her about the TIW preparation. According to her plan which is excerpted in Table 7, she collected observational notes "before, during, and after various types of classroom discussions" and utilized transcriptions of student conversations as data. She also

included ideas for two approaches to data analysis using her classroom data and then also looking at school data and the “testing plan” with her principal and the testing coordinator. By November, she had already enacted a portion of her plan by “narrowing her focus” to the consensus placemat and developing an “action plan” with her testing coordinator and principal which, in effect, positioned her inquiry focus work within her principal’s broader vision for school improvement. She also coordinated with her administration to bring her inquiry focus and TIW into the larger school community.

After collecting two points of data in her classroom in October and January using the consensus placemat, Ms. Martin’s attention shifted toward preparing her TIW as a professional development presentation for the New Teacher Academy at her school at the request of her principal. Preparing for this workshop for new teachers became the new bullseye for her teacher inquiry focus in place of her attention to using the consensus placemat in her classroom. This was further evidence of Ms. Martin’s orientation whereby her interest in achieving her goal of being a mentor teacher moved to the forefront of her decision-making and became her priority.

Table 7

Ms. Martin’s Research Plan and Timeline for the months of October-December

Timeline	Classroom Practice/ Schoolwide Professional Development	Data Collection in the Classroom/ Research	Data Analysis “Individual Time”	Data Analysis “Group Time”
October		Conduct research on various discussion strategies	Narrow focus for the research project	Develop an Action Plan with Testing Coordinator to focus on enhancing discussion

		Read the book <i>Read, Talk, Write</i> by Laura Robb
November/ December	Modify lesson plans to include form of discussion (ongoing)	<i>Enhancing Professional Practice</i> by Charlotte Danielson – Focus on Domain 3b

Table 8 below provides a snapshot of the lesson observations I conducted in Ms. Martin's classroom at her invitation during the spring of 2018. My interest was in observing a variety of classroom practices and topics; however, Ms. Martin had a very narrow focus for her inquiry for using consensus placemats with her on-grade level eighth-grade classes. Because of challenges aligning Ms. Martin's schedule and my schedule, it was pre-determined that I would observe her first period class on multiple occasions. As her class periods met for 70 minutes, I was able to observe a variety of lesson elements including one lesson in which Ms. Martin utilized the consensus placemat which was central to her inquiry. While I was in her classroom for the first observation, I became aware of the writing that Ms. Martin's students were engaged in that I saw as clearly related to her vision for "honing student voice" around the question of whether to "speak up or stay silent." As requested, Ms. Martin invited me in to see two lessons during writing process activities including brainstorming, drafting, and participating in informal conferences with Ms. Martin. As will happen in schools, during the third lesson observation, Ms. Martin's class was unexpectedly interrupted eleven times during the period for students to go to the health room for vision screening. After

discussion with Ms. Martin, it was decided that I would add a fourth observation but would still include data from the lesson because Ms. Martin felt that, although the lesson wasn't what she envisioned, the student writing that came out of it was what she had hoped for. I was able to add a fourth observation of Ms. Martin's sixth graders working on a folktale writing activity which provided a different group of students and topic for me to observe as Ms. Martin taught her curricular content at a time of the year, post "testing season," when she felt more at liberty to enact her vision for teaching writing.

Table 8

<i>Ms. Martin's Lesson Observations</i>				
Lesson Date	Class Observed	Lesson Content Topic	Inquiry Focus Connection	Lesson Elements
4/24/2018	Period 1 70 minutes On Grade Level 8 (25 students)	"The Diary of Anne Frank;" making inferences in literature	Use of consensus placemat to answer an inference question; hearing student voice	Teacher reviewed worksheet, group discussion of guiding question, partner turn and talk review, group consensus placemat, group share-out
5/21/2018	Period 1 70 minutes On Grade Level 8 (26 students)	"The Diary of Anne Frank;" How do you write a snapshot memoir?	Writing Process (Brainstorming, modeling writing); hearing student voice, authentic writing	Teacher directed unlocking a writing prompt, teacher modeling of a mentor text, individual brainstorming of topics, group sharing session
5/24/2018	Period 1 70 minutes	"The Diary of Anne Frank;"	Writing Process; hearing student	Teacher directed review

	On Grade Level 8 (22 students)	Writers Workshop for snapshot memoir	voice, teacher conferencing and feedback during the writing process	of criteria; Group read- aloud of read mentor text for descriptive language; Students draft snapshot memoir on computers (11 lesson interruptions)
6/4/2018	Period 2 70 minutes On Grade Level 6 (22 students)	Generation to Generation: What does folklore reveal about our cultural values?	Narrative writing using descriptive details, engaging students in independent writing	Multiple Choice warm- up “assessment;” teacher directed presentation of folktale elements; student independent drafting with informal teacher feedback

Coming to Consensus: Enacting a Curricular Vision for Writing in 8 RELA

Ms. Martin had been teaching seventh grade for many years when she found herself teaching eighth grade and sixth grade at her new school in the fall of 2017 after conceiving her inquiry focus. Therefore, she was learning a new curriculum and adjusting to a new school while implementing new ideas that she had learned during the BWP Summer Institute. When we met for the first time for the initial interview, she shared that she felt “sort of in the water, and I’m trying to figure out how to get as many of the students that I can.” When asked about the level of authority she had at her new school, she shared that she had authority to implement her curricular vision for teaching writing

and literature the way that she wanted to in spite of what from an outside perspective appeared to be a rigid set of expectations including a set of procedures that hung in every classroom detailing how to “unlock the writing prompt.”

After giving up her initial plan to develop the grab bag of discussion strategies, Ms. Martin’s returned to her focus on implementing the consensus placemat for collaborative discussion that would activate students thinking about the text that they were reading for the purposes of deepening and channeling those ideas into writing. Ms. Martin started in October with her first implementation with her eighth-grade students, utilizing the consensus placemat to prepare students to respond to a Text Dependent Question (TDQ) on Frederick Douglass’ speech, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” The TDQ was “What was Frederick Douglass’s purpose for writing,” What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” In her Research Data Collection and Analysis for the BWP fall course, Ms. Martin, true to her interest in research, reported initial findings from her inquiry. Ms. Martin reported that her initial strategy of using turn and talk to activate students’ thinking about the question resulted in responses that “were vague and did not break the surface as far as thinking critically about the text.” She also stated that during the turn and talk activity, “there was no way I could hold students accountable for their responses” in order to evaluate whether or not their responses reflected critical thinking. This led Ms. Martin to choose the consensus placemat as a follow-up activity. Ms. Martin stated, “As expected, with my class from last year, I had to modify the consensus placemats to give focus to the task and to gear students’ thinking.” In her written report for the BWP, she described the modifying the placemat for different size groups which she said “was very important to me because it gave students a personal area on their

groups' paper to call their own. This area was their personal space in which I asked them to use in order to "Saturate their Thinking."

Ms. Martin's choice of the consensus placemat and her emphasis on giving students a specific space to call their own for their thinking were indicators of her specific theoretical perspective of writing development. Ms. Martin viewed writing from a cognitive perspective. In this perspective of writing development, writing is a mental process involving making thinking visible (MacArthur & Graham, 2016). In her classroom, students produced texts representing their thoughts, such as their notes on their consensus placemats, which she referred to as "saturation of thinking," for later retrieval (MacArthur & Graham, 2016). Ms. Martin's interest in regulating the writing environment by "gearing students' thinking" and wanting students to learn to appreciate a quiet time for thinking were also reflective of this theoretical perspective.

In April, when I visited Ms. Martin's classroom for the first time, students had been engaged in using the consensus placement strategy on one additional occasion during the school year, two months earlier in January. When I met with Ms. Martin for the pre-observation interview before school, I followed her from the copy room back to her classroom as she pulled together the materials that she was going to be using for her lesson. As Ms. Martin was preparing, she accepted my offer to help prep the placemats. At that point, she shared with me that she was "not a prepared teacher." She said candidly, "You will see me actually do direction and do things as I go along. That's the only way I'm able to survive as a teacher." As we talked about her lesson, I told her that I would be interested to know if she made changes as she went along and asked if there was anything that she wanted me to look for during the lesson. She stated, "I'd be

interested to know if I'm [making adjustments] more because of classroom management or because of the actual academic and the thinking and the way that the text is going."

As Ms. Martin stated in her "Research Data Collection and Analysis," preparing the placemats was an important element of the process for her. As she gave me directions for how to help her, she described very specific intentions for the placemat and how she saw it is a critical tool for enacting her vision for students' interaction with the text. She then asked me for the placemats so that she could put the final touches on them. She explained:

I do a line on top and just two on the side. My TIW focused on *your space*. And so, this is now their space. So, what I'll tell them and hopefully I'll remember today: 'Saturate your area with your thinking.' So, let's fill it up. What else? thoughts? So, my goal, too, for this activity, which I didn't put it in the curriculum, um, I mean in the lesson plan is my goal is to extend their thinking. So, you wrote something down, how can we add on and extend it? (to R about placemat): I'll do the lines, I'll do the lines. You don't have to worry about it.

Ms. Martin went on to describe the manner in which she would draw lines in the middle of the placemat and then include the question, "We infer that Anne Frank..." in the center of the placemat as a way to "gear" students thinking (Figure 5). She explained her theory, "So I give them a little lead. Maybe that's the word I was looking for, to sort of gear the focus because if I don't have the lead there, the focus won't be geared." Ms. Martin went on to describe that students knew the phrase "Saturate your thinking." She aimed for students to "hold [their] own thoughts in a private place," speculating that the paper placemat might be too open and that using sticky notes would actually be better. She concluded that once students had completed their personal space, "...[N]ow that we have this whole thing, we can actually think together. We can write together."

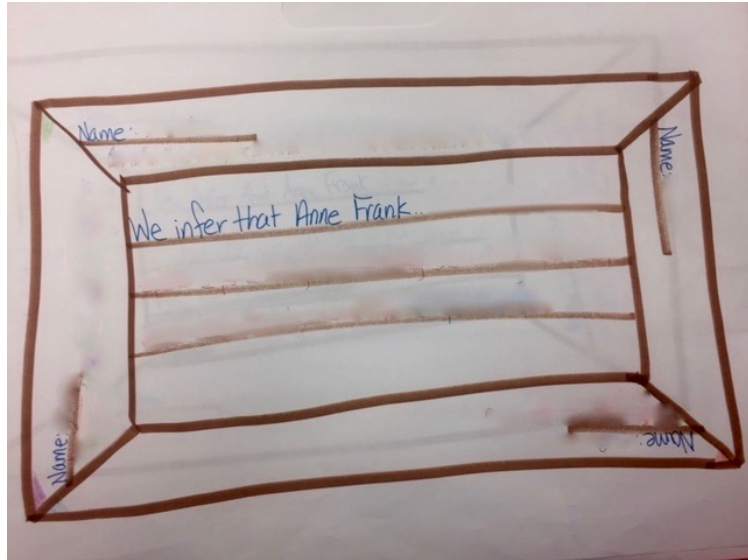


Figure 5: Consensus placemat for a group of four to answer, “What can we infer about Anne Frank?”

Ms. Martin shared that she intended to be listening for two things as she checked in with groups as they worked independently and then together to reach consensus. First, she said, “I’m listening for what they’re inferring about Anne, exactly where they remember that information...” Secondly, she stated, “ I’m going to see a step further if any other discussion leads to what is in the folder, what we’ve learned about the Holocaust, what we’ve learned about Nazis, what we’ve seen in the video. So basically, I’m going around listening for synthesis of the information.” She went on, “I want to see how they come to a consensus of, based on scenes one and two, what can you infer about Anne.”

At the time of the lesson observation, students had been working on the unit that included reading the play, “The Diary of Anne Frank” for two weeks. Even though the curriculum deemphasized teaching background information about the Holocaust, Ms. Martin had extended the activities beyond the recommended one day to several days. She said that she and her colleague had made this decision because, “...we as English

teachers at our school are like, well, how are kids supposed to thoroughly understand Anne Frank?” Ms. Martin decided instead to focus on historical background about the Holocaust while also using journal writing activities to connect to the themes of the unit, which will be described in the section on Ms. Martin’s vision for student learning. Ms. Martin shared with me a student folder of activities her students had completed on what they had learned about the Holocaust using primary source documents from the curriculum guide as well as other informational sources and activities that she had found on the Internet. She stated of the curriculum guide:

So, I, I guess what I was basically saying was that there was not enough information for the kids to understand thoroughly about the Holocaust. I mean, the reason why my reading yesterday was quiet with pretty much all of my students was because, um, they had that background knowledge.

In this statement, Ms. Martin’s immediate concerns for student engagement prevailed over her usual deference to the curriculum and to the Reading English Language Arts curriculum office as an authority. Consistent with her orientation that focused on her immediate concerns in the classroom, she prioritized background information on Anne Frank for the purposes of getting students to participate in “quiet” reading.

On the day I observed the consensus placemat activity, the class had just read scenes one and two of the play together with students taking turns reading the roles. Before moving into the group activity, Ms. Martin reviewed with students a worksheet on information that they had collected. “Info about Anne” and “Info about the Nazis” were displayed in two columns of the front board. On this list, the class had identified that Anne kept a diary in hiding that she started writing when she was 13, that she gets nervous at strange sounds, that she is grateful to their friends for helping them, and that she records her honest feelings in her diary. “Info about the Nazis,” included that at the

introduction of the play, the war is over; that the Nazis had denied Jewish people their businesses and activities such as traveling and biking; and that the Nazis made Jews wear the Star of David on all clothing.

After giving students time to finish with their notes, Ms. Martin reminded the class of the purpose of consensus. The class called out “agreement,” and Ms. Martin said, “You guys remember, you’re getting me excited.” She then proceeded to instruct them to use a colored pencil that had been passed out to write their name on their section of the paper placemat. Then, Ms. Martin gave students directions for what she was looking for during the group activity with the consensus placemat:

Let me tell you the process we're about to go through for the next 20 to 30 minutes, however long this discussion takes. You're going to have a think time. Where you think about the question I pose. You're going to then have a write time where you write. Now, shush, I'm hearing that voice again, that same voice. The purpose of the think time is for you to gather your thoughts based upon your discussion today that you've already had about what the story of Anne Frank was yesterday. We've had that discussion. Quiet, please. And I want you to think about that as the question is posed. Then you'll have a write time where you write quietly. That's the purpose. Let me, let me be real specific. Shush. After you think, I don't want your writing to be based on someone else's opinion, although you've already had share time, you're going to think about the answer, then write it down quietly, and then you're going to discuss. Now, some of you, (to a student) I see your hand. I'll be with you. (to class) Some of you may remember, every time we do this, I ask you to saturate your area with your thinking, that area with your name. I want you to really saturate it with your thinking and the ideas is that we write at the same time. So, let me introduce the question, which is very simple: Based on scenes one and two from yesterday. (To a student): we did both scenes. Uh huh. (writes on the board) What can YOU (emphasis added) infer about Anne Frank?

At that point, several students were talking to each other, and Ms. Martin noted, “We have three talkers” and continued to try to determine who the voices belonged to. As the voices quieted, Ms. Martin returned to giving students directions:

We're there (points to the board): Think, write, discuss. Then we're going to write again and share. So, at this point I want you to think about this question based on scenes one and two. What can you infer about Anne Frank? Think about the notes. Shush. Don't talk to your partner because I don't want their thinking. I don't want your writing at all tainted. I want this writing to be strictly based on scenes one and two yesterday and any other information. Almost done with the think time. We're going to go another minute. (to student) I'll be with you. I see your hand up. I'll be with you. Shush. (to class) Think time. Think time. One minute, one minute. I have two students talking. Minutes almost up. Shush, no talking yet. Four, three, two, one. Now it's time to write. I don't want this to be a discussion time. Go ahead and saturate your space with your thinking based on scene one and two. What can you write about her personality or what do you know about her based-on scenes one and two? What do we know about her? You may begin writing. It's not discussing time.

As Ms. Martin started to walk around to table groups, students shifted the paper which was designed in a way that made it difficult to write at the same time. Ms. Martin said to the class, "Saturate your area with your thinking..." Some students could be seen moving the entire placemat onto their own desk to write in their space while a few students went to the pencil sharpener to sharpen their colored pencils. Ms. Martin suggested:

If you push this up, you can write at the same time. (to the class): You guys, the idea with the placemat is that we all eat together, like we're eating dinner. So, if whoever can write at the same time, is there anyone?

One student stated that she was writing upside down. Some students waited while others wrote in their space. Ms. Ms. Martin came over to where I was sitting in the back of the room and remarked to me that it would have been better if she had used sticky notes because students could not write at the same time.

As students took turns writing their own response in their section of the placemat, Ms. Martin provided directions for the next part of the consensus building process by asking students to read their responses aloud to each other. She explained to the groups:

And then I want you guys to come to a consensus, all right? Some groups in the past that come to a consensus through voting or taking some of them, vote on the best answer or they come to agreement.

As Ms. Martin walked around the room, she remarked on students' answers and asked students about their process of developing their consensus. While Ms. Martin noted that some groups engaged in a lot of discussion, others did not. As Ms. Martin walked around she talked with one group about their process:

- Ms. Martin: It says, 'We infer Anne Frank was a very adventurous person and she was very honest because she honestly wrote how she felt.' How did you guys come up with that answer?
- student: By reading all of ours out loud.
- Ms. Martin: Okay. How else did you come up with that answer?
- student: Because we basically all wrote like, the same stuff, just a different wording.
- Ms. Martin: Okay, so with that said, what type of discussion did you have? Did you have a discussion at all, talking about Anne Frank?
- student: No.
- Ms. Martin: Okay. I just want you guys to be honest. And why not?
- student: Because it wasn't necessary to discuss.
- Ms. Martin: (reads students' writing) What else do you think led to you not having a discussion besides that the answers were there (points to placemat). Do you feel that you probably haven't, you haven't read enough of the play to be able to infer a lot about her?
- student: Yes.

Each group was asked to select a representative to share their consensus statement with the rest of the class, which was a common practice in Ms. Martin's classroom. Hands shot up as Ms. Martin invited each representative to share their statement and "any concerns you had or disagreements or situations you would like to highlight." Group answers varied, most drawing on background knowledge and the details from the list of the board to make statements that contained minimal text-based inferences. For example, "We infer that Anne Frank is a Jew that spent two years in hiding and wrote in her diary

known as the Diary of Anne Frank.” The final group, however, shared, “We infer that Anne Frank is confused, and she wants things to go back to normal before Hitler reigned.” At that point, Ms. Martin directed the class’s attention to that group’s use of the word “confused” by writing it on the whiteboard. She said to the class in a dramatic voice:

Whew. This group is, is totally...they're using. They're using this word right here to describe Anne Frank: (points to whiteboard) *confused*, not amazing, not adventurous. They're using confused and they're basing it, correct me if I'm wrong. They're basing this information based on exactly what was happening in the play yesterday. She's rushed into hiding. She, they have to put on all these different layers of clothes just to walk through the street. She's coming to a new location, not only are there, they're sharing a space basically, spaces with another family, a cat, themselves. The Nazis are marching up and down the street. You hear the bell of the clock at 8:00 in the morning. They have to shut it down, be quiet. They can't use the bathroom during the day. What are some other things they can't do during the day?

Students called out a list of activities including that the Franks can’t cook, can’t be loud, can’t throw away trash, can’t dance, among their answers. Ms. Martin continued, “So when this group uses the word ‘confused,’ it’s a whole new living arrangement.” Ms. Martin then proceeded to bring closure to the period by sharing the agenda for the next day and reminding students of their “big” guiding question, whether to speak up or stay silent. She concluded:

I want you to keep all this information in your head that we discussed today, you wrote down today, you adjusted your thinking, but most importantly, I want you to take this big question home to your family, your mom and dad, and ask them what they think.

Ms. Martin’s emphasis on adjusting thinking was consistent with her cognitive perspective of writing development and was a theme that she returned to frequently

during this unit of study as she was looking for students to engage in expanding their own thinking to consider new ideas.

When I met with Ms. Martin immediately after class to discuss the lesson, we discussed whether there were any events or decision that she made during the class period that she wanted to return to. Although Ms. Martin made frequent mention of not having “impeccable classroom management,” on this occasion, she did not point to student behavior but instead to her own selection of the question for the consensus placemat. Ms. Martin stated that she felt the question was “so personal and then to try to force them to come to a group decision about that was really stretching it.” In considering if her goals for the lesson had been attained, Ms. Martin stated that although the answers to the question were not what she was looking for, her “goal of getting them to focus discussing on that particular text in the play was successful...so as far as them starting to read scene three tomorrow, they are ready.” She concluded from student responses and the group consensus statements that students had been thinking about the background knowledge, the characters, so “that’s successful to me. However, I do believe that that question was a little general and not driving to exactly a particular answer. You could go all over the place and it did.” She reflected,

I think I was looking for those words of ‘adventurous,’ ‘honest,’ dah, dah, and maybe a little bit more added to it. Some of them were just like, they followed along with the worksheet that we did prior to that...or I was looking more for like that they wrote ‘confused.’

During the lesson, Ms. Martin had stopped to write “confused” on the board. She shared her intention for directing the class’ attention to that answer:

It was totally different from the other answers. You know, all the answers were pretty happy-go-lucky type, you know, adventurous, nice, hopeful, truthful,

honest, truth, you know, all those things. And that sort of went against the grain. So, I wanted to point that out because, once again, the thinking is the whole process of the consensus placemat is what we do in discussion. I don't know if it turned the tide for someone like over there.

Again, in this instance, Ms. Martin's interest in engaging students in a thinking process that would allow them to examine their own thinking in light of new information was a priority for student learning.

To further explain her thinking, Ms. Martin referenced an earlier class discussion that she when a few students had admitted that their position had changed on the topic of whether or not to speak up or to stay silent. Ms. Martin used this example to explain how she had wanted to encourage that type of discussion and thoughtful consideration using the consensus placemat activity. She explained her reaction during that earlier moment when a student unexpectedly volunteered that their thinking had changed:

I didn't expect anyone to raise their hand saying that their answer had changed. I really didn't expect anyone to say and actually raise their hand. I was just posing the question, and we had a lot of thinking that changed and that's exactly what I want to happen when we do the consensus placemats or any other discussion tool is how is my thinking changing based upon the information I'm hearing and the way you think and how can I add that to my own knowledge and create a new way or a new form of looking at it, new way of looking at the situation. So yeah, that, that was it for the 'confused' and why I put it on the board.

Ms. Martin had hoped that the consensus placemat would be the tool that would get students to "formally think in some way." She evaluated that using it at the point in the play and with the question that she selected did not work as she envisioned it although it had worked well with students' engagement with the question of speaking up or staying silent. She stated that she had not "gotten there a hundred percent at all this year" with engaging the students in the silent writing time, in particular, that she thought was so

critical for “leading the change” in thinking, which was the outcome that she was looking for. Ms. Martin recognized that the design that she had used for marking up the consensus placemats had not helped facilitate that quiet time, as students were unable to simultaneously write in their own area while other members of their group were writing. Although she also admitted that she might not have “geared” students’ thinking effectively during the time when she had asked them to think before writing, explaining that she had not considered what she actually wanted students to be doing during that time. She went on to restate her strong belief, however, in the value of that silent, personal writing time:

But the kids don't really know the power of writing in silence and thinking. They are too tooled up. They are used to things coming at them a multitude of times instead of just focusing on one thing at a time. So, I'm still working on that.

This belief in the need for silent writing time was one that created tension for Ms. Martin as she struggled to maintain control over the classroom environment during these silent thinking periods. This belief that students were “too tooled up” to think was also a belief that remained unexamined by Ms. Martin even in the face of evidence that students were able to consider multiple perspectives and did not necessarily need silence in order to think deeply about their ideas. For example, students’ answers to Ms. Martin’s guiding question about speaking up or staying silent had demonstrated that students were synthesizing new ideas and changing their thinking based on new information which were goals consistent with Ms. Martin’s cognitive perspective of writing development.

At the end of the year, Ms. Martin did not share any new information or experiences related to how she had personally used the consensus placemat in her own classroom. By that point, I was clear that Ms. Martin held a much broader vision for

activating student voice that was represented but not defined by her use of the consensus placemat. The consensus placemat was a practical choice for the development of a professional development workshop for the new teachers in her school which had become Ms. Martin's overriding focus for applying her BWP learning to her vision for her professional growth. Although it appeared that Ms. Martin did not return to using the placemat with her own students after the lesson that I observed, she mentored several other teachers through the process of creating and using the consensus placemat as a discussion tool in their classrooms during the remainder of the school year which gave her great satisfaction.

Balancing Social and Standard English: Enacting Learning for the 21st Century

Ms. Martin had an understated vision for connecting the classroom to 21st Century society. Ms. Martin's vision for bringing real-world issues into the classroom, as was mentioned in the section on her curricular vision, appeared to be in service to her immediate concerns for connecting students to the literature they were reading and engaging them in the lesson more so than it was a vision for developing students for society, to be equipped for citizenship or prepared for college or career opportunities. For example, she shared her belief that students would not be connected to the literature without of her intentions for using real-life scenarios for journal entry questions:

So it's constantly trying to keep that real-life thing moving in the classroom on a daily basis just to, all I'm trying to do is attach them to the text in a more creative, not even creative way, but in a sneaky way, whereas else I'd be struggling just to get them to open up the book and read the actual play, you know how it is with middle schoolers. So, it's my sneaky way of getting them in, and that's why the journal questions, journal questions would never ask them a type of PARCC or type of formal question.

During the reading of “The Diary of Anne Frank,” Ms. Martin did use journal entries and other writing activities to activate students’ outside of school experiences to bring personal meaning to curricular topics. She explained that “there’s not a lot in our curriculum to really draw them in a personal, meaningful, I think, way.” Ms. Martin also validated her students for bringing real-life experiences into the classroom though she often expressed bewilderment at the situations that students found themselves in, particularly in students’ examples about their lives on social media. Although she showed care for students’ feelings, how she wanted students to engage in learning experiences that would transfer to the broader world or to their futures was an unarticulated vision.

As a result, there was little sense of an outside conversation in Ms. Martin’s classroom. During the day that Ms. Martin’s class was interrupted eleven times for vision screening, field trip announcements, and searches for a missing Chromebook cart, Ms. Martin mentioned to me that students had been revved up because of the recent school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and the March for Our Lives that had recently occurred; however, there was no sense of these events during any of the classroom discussions that occurred during her lessons that I witnessed, even though the class was studying Anne Frank and other literature that evoked themes of justice and oppression. At the end of that class period of disruptions, a student whom Ms. Martin frequently tangled with over her cellphone came to Ms. Martin with a friend who proudly handed Ms. Martin a piece of paper, stating, “She got a letter from the U.S. Senator.” After glancing at the letter, Ms. Martin responded, “Oh, my gosh, this is awesome. Did you write a letter to them about guns?” The student responded that she had written the letter “about gun violence,” and Ms. Martin asked if it was on her own or for a class. By

the time the student responded that she had written it on her own, Ms. Martin had dropped out of the conversation and turned her attention to giving directions to a student nearby about putting away the laptops and asking another student to leave their work with her, and then the bell rang. Later, when I mentioned this interaction, Ms. Martin expressed her regret at having neglected to follow up with her student about the letter. It was in moments like this, that her vision for engaging students with anything outside of the classroom seemed to be swallowed up in her daily efforts to “keep it moving.”

One facet of Ms. Martin’s vision that did seem related to her students’ futures, but was hidden from their view, was Ms. Martin’s ongoing struggle to reconcile her own vision for students to “be writers” which was as an abstract hope for students to have a more pure and free experience with personal expression and ownership of their own voices as well as the ability to tell their own stories fearlessly. This hope was born out of her own experience as a student who had worried about whether her writing was wrong and been made to “feel less because you don’t speak the Queen’s English.” As someone who had wanted to be a forensics coach, focusing on oral interpretation, speaking, and acting, Ms. Martin had been a reluctant English teacher charged with formal writing instruction. As an African-American English teacher of majority minority students, she went on to explain that balancing expectations of Standard English and “being okay with who she is” had been a “nasty battle” all of her life that had influenced her teaching of English. She shared the dilemma that she carried into the classroom:

[I]t's a nasty barrier to have when you're afraid to write because you don't want to be looked at as stupid and that, that, that right there is the key because you tend to hide your creative ideas. You tend to hide yourself as a writer because it's not the right way.

This was a significant revelation that Ms. Martin shared that she felt she had not addressed as a personal struggle until she engaged in the BWP community as a writer during the Summer Institute. Ms. Martin's intention in striving to find the balance between freedom and structured writing experiences was to keep her students from experiencing the same kind of judgment that she had experienced in school that had plagued her into adulthood.

Ms. Martin's vision for what it meant to be a writer, therefore, she positioned as in opposition to the vision of what it meant to be a writer that was presented in the curriculum guide and in particular represented in the District's formal writing tasks. She described how she intended to "allow my kids to have a comfort level with the way they talk" which was enacted regularly through the classroom discourse and culture of sharing that played a large role in her vision for student learning. Indeed, everyone participated in her classroom. She went on to explain that to develop student voice, she was committed to not criticizing her students for the way that they spoke within "their social circles;" however, she noted that as an English teacher, she had a responsibility to her students when it came to writing. She explained, "when you put it on paper, it's my job then to show you what is Standard..."

This tension between being sensitive to students' voices while also upholding Standard English was evident in the way that Ms. Martin approached preparing students for the eighth-grade culminating writing assignment. Because Ms. Martin found the curricular guidelines to be so restrictive, she had included many more impromptu and journal writing experiences to build students' creative thinking and free expression of their voices during the early stages of the writing process which had led to an unexpected

opening of the floodgates for student writing, community building and sharing, as will be described in the section on enacting student learning. Ms. Martin said of the work she had done that had tapped into students' voice:

Well, I've already gotten the gut. Now it's developing the actual story. I've got it. I'm there. It's an emotional there. But it's now taking that in, coloring it, and showing and not telling and um, tapping into the writing that parallels their voice without being such a teacher and saying this is the wrong way or this is the not right way, et cetera, et cetera.

This tension Ms. Martin felt about what it meant to prepare students to “be writers” became apparent on the day that Ms. Martin transitioned students from those early free writing experiences to the culminating piece of formal writing that students were expected to produce from the curriculum, the Snapshot Memoir. Ms. Martin explained the purpose of the assignment to students that the memoir was to “center on a moment in time when you made a critical choice to either speak up or remain silent.” Ms. Martin had prepared students with numerous opportunities to consider this question from many angles, and it had become a centering and connecting thread in her classroom that had gotten to that “gut” that she had described. Ms. Martin had also shared ownership with students as they engaged in a prolific burst of informal writing and sharing during the unit; they had written journal entries, poems, and tweets among other forms of personal expression from their “hearts.” These pieces of writing now decorated the classroom as a visible reminder of how they had tapped into those deep feelings.

On the day that Ms. Martin introduced the Snapshot Memoir to the class, she reminded students of all the ways that they had already activated their voices around this topic of speaking up or staying silent. She recounted:

We started off the unit where you wrote on this three by five card whether or not it is correct to speak up or to be silent...Cece, you believed that you should be silent. That should reflect this particular writing activity. Please note that you can write your snapshot memoir, still believing that it's okay to be silent. Okay? My example I'm going to tell you about today is when I was silent. I didn't say a thing for over almost 30 years and you're going to learn about that experience today because I'm going to use it as a model in order for, in order to help you write.

When it came time to introduce the actual writing prompt, however, Ms. Martin shifted to a different tone. She said to her students:

I want us to utilize every day this week and the time that we have next week to utilize writing in a sense or write in a sense as if we are already in high school because the next two weeks is pretty much it. After that, you're a ninth grader in high school.

She went on to spell out to the class the significance of the assignment. She said:

I'm going to say it three times so that those, that those that are not really. Those of you that are not really paying attention can hear. This is an assessment grade. This snapshot memoir is an assessment grade and here is my last time telling you that this snapshot memoir is an assessment.

Ms. Martin then guided the students through a shortened version of the required schoolwide procedure of “unlocking” the prompt using a T-chart to break down the statements in the writing prompt into verbs on one side of the T-chart and the objects of the verbs on the other side, which elicited groans from students. Ms. Martin pointed the T-Chart and said, “Think -- about your own life experiences.” Ms. Martin then reminded students:

We did this last week in the form of thinking about the topic. I sorta pieced and gave you a little bit of this task last week without throwing it to you on this paper. Because sometimes when you guys see these tasks, you just sort of shut down, right?

Students affirmed this statement as Ms. Martin acknowledged students’ attitudes toward the format of the task but then tried to bring students back. As Ms. Martin finished the

task of unlocking the prompt with students, she reminded students of the writing that they had already done to prepare for this more formal writing task:

So, a snapshot memoir shows what happened in that key moment with the use of first-person narration, vivid description, descriptive language and strong voice. Last week when you guys wrote on the board with your triangle, that was a strong voice.

Ms. Martin had shared with me before the lesson that she had spent so much time on freewriting activities with the intention that students would be prepared to continue with the topics that they had already developed, which she thought would facilitate the process of moving students into the formal writing. As students turned their attention to the writing prompt and to the new graphic organizer that Ms. Martin provided them, many students seemed to no longer make the connection between the freewriting pieces that were displayed on the bulletin board and the task of creating the snapshot memoir. Although students had physically pointed to their statements on the board as they were entering the classroom at the beginning of the period and while Ms. Martin was talking, once the formal task was presented, many students no longer seemed interested in using their topics for the formal Snapshot Memoir assignment. As Ms. Martin walked around the room talking to students about their topics and reiterating the target of selecting “a moment in time when you made a critical choice to either speak up or remain silent,” she had a discussion with a student about their topic that was representative of what was occurring in the class during the transition into the formal writing:

Student: What do I do If I'm changing my mind?

Ms. Martin: There's nothing to do. You still keep what's on the board and all you're going to do is write your new one right here (pointing to graphic organizer). So, the purpose of your memoir now is to write about whatever moment in time you want to write about, to write about the time that I...

Student: That my bunny died.

Ms. Martin: Does that have something with your writing? Remember, I said let's focus on topics about our writing.

Student: Like what would my topic be because I don't understand my topic?

By the time the class period had ended, many students had made some progress completing their initial plan for the events in the snapshot memoir. Students were invited to come forward to present the ideas that they had developed in a public sharing session as was a common practice in Ms. Martin's classroom. A few students were selected to share, and while they all presented a significant moment, many were missing the curricular connection of a time that they spoke up or stayed silent. One student, for example, shared how when she was four, her aunt died and how she had not understood it then, but now she had learned to appreciate the people in her life. Ms. Martin punctuated each of the student sharing sessions by offering a way that they might connect the story that they had selected to the curricular theme for the formal writing assignment. For example, she stated:

Very good. Very good. Thank you for sharing your heart. I hear your lesson. I hear your lesson and I think your 'speak up' in yours is that letting others know that you love them. Speaking up to show your gratefulness and gratitude to them for the lesson you learned.

As she reflected on this lesson, Ms. Martin explained the struggle she felt as she tried to find the right approach to help move students forward with this piece of required writing in a way that was consistent with her vision for students' development as authentic writers. She said, "Somehow I have to get them to the end without making them feel like it's so totally structured to the point of where I shut down the writing, and if I try to give them too much structure, then I, I suffocate the voice and I'm trying to get this

voice to be so loud without being so structured at the same time. That's, that's my issue.”

This tension was one that illustrated the mismatch between Ms. Martin’s vision for student writing and what she viewed as an overly structured and restrictive curriculum.

As Ms. Martin talked about what she might do to find balance between freedom and structure within this formal writing assignment, she decided to change what she envisioned she was going to do the next day with the class so that she could refocus the students in a way that would more effectively bring forward their voices. Because of her deference to the curriculum, however, she also decided to hold students accountable for including the curricular theme through adding it as a line item of the ten-item rubric with a point value. She explained, “...because some of these memoirs will not be about a speak up or a silence, so I assigned points to that.” Ms. Martin continued to negotiate this tension between authentic writing and assigned writing throughout the unit on “Anne Frank.” As she became more confident in allowing her students to step “outside the box,” she was able to bring some balance to what she viewed as an over emphasis on structured writing that mirrored standardized testing tasks in order to provide students opportunities to develop as “real writers.”

By the time students finished and turned in their final drafts, the Snapshot Memoir provided a pivotal role in clarifying for Ms. Martin what her students saw as authentic writing. At the end of the year when students were asked to complete a journal entry about the one thing that they would remember for their rest of their lives about being in eighth grade, many students wrote about the feelings that were shared during their work on the Snapshot Memoir.

Sharing from Our Hearts: Enacting Student Learning

In addition to her focus on honing student voice, Ms. Martin had a strong vision for sharing the classroom environment with her students. Ms. Martin used the essential question of whether to speak up or to stay silent as a touchstone and unifying thread for connecting students' experiences to the themes in "The Diary of Anne Frank" as well as the other literature and nonfiction that they would be reading during the unit. Because it was spring and testing season had ended, Ms. Martin felt freed to engage in more impromptu type writing in her classroom using "text to self" type questions. She reported that she had used journal writing in the classroom frequently in years past but hadn't used it that year because she felt the need to focus on "PARCC style questions" stating that she would never use a question such as you would find on the PARCC assessment for a personal writing piece like a journal entry. As she started the unit, she had found the question of whether to speak up or stay silent "powerful," and although she was cautious about how to approach the content in the unit with students, she had decided to keep returning to that question every day, vowing that during the unit, she would need to keep mixing "the dark with the light."

Speaking up or staying silent. On the day that I visited Ms. Martin's first period class the first time, initial responses to the question about speaking up or staying silent had been written on yellow, pink and green index cards and stapled to the front bulletin board under the prompt: "It is better to _____ (speak up or be silent). Ms. Martin had grouped student responses into the two categories in columns with approximately 15 cards in the middle. At a glance, there were approximately twice as many cards stapled to the "Speak up" side. Students' answers on the cards were varied. Some referred to

historical examples, many were personal as well as hypothetical. On the Speak Up side, one student argued that if you don't say anything, "things can get worse." Other students argued that speaking up was necessary for understanding and "know[ing] more about life experiences." On the Be Silent side, one student argued it is better to be silent because being silent can save your life. The student continued by explaining that when you mind your own business, "you do you," but getting in another person's business was "stepping out of line." Another student shared how being silent was better because everything you do and say can be "dismissed," opinions can be "crushed," and ideas "dismantled." Other students struggled with the choice itself and saw themselves on the fence. One student wrote about the challenge of deciding, arguing that Martin Luther King spoke out while Rosa Parks "didn't make a sound." Others felt that the decision was situational and impossible to take a stand either way without knowing more.

On the same day that I observed Ms. Martin's class using the consensus placemat which was two weeks into their study of "The Diary of Anne Frank," Ms. Martin posed the guiding question for students to consider how their thinking was changing, which was a question that she was particularly interested in and related to her the purpose behind using the consensus placemat. She asked:

So, our big question that we've been looking at for the past two weeks now, is it better to be silent or to speak up? ...So, with those three or four hands that raised, is there anyone who would be willing to share? You don't have to. You can keep your opinions to yourself as to why your thinking might have adjusted or changed. Is there anyone?

Ms. Martin called on a student who spoke very quietly. Amid students' complaints that they could not hear, Ms. Martin asked if the student would stand so that everyone could hear him clearly. The student said, "I think it's better to be silent because my dad always

tells me that it's better to be thought the fool than to speak in the moment. Ms. Martin then went to the bulletin board and moved his card to “Be silent.” Ms. Martin then sighed and paused before calling on Troy, a student who she had identified to me before class as in a “strictly behavior group” and an eighth-grade “repeater.”

Ms. Martin: (sigh) Troy?
Troy: Yeah.
Ms. Martin: Your hand was up.
Troy: Alright, so I'm like, I'm like...

Ms. Martin addressed students who were talking to refocus them as a message came over the intercom system giving directions to the sixth-grade teachers to begin testing.

Troy: (pause) So I'm like in the middle because if it's somebody I care about...
Ms. Martin: I love it.
Troy: And if they're like scared to speak up or something, but at the same time, if it's like a stranger on the street and you don't know them, I feel like you shouldn't be minding their business because there could be something going on that you don't know about, so I was like, if a close friend might be going through something, then you should like speak up or something.
Ms. Martin: (to another student who dropped something on the floor) You can quietly pick that up. Troy, I appreciate that because a lot of students, not just this class last week, felt that ‘Hey, if it's none of my business, it's none of my business. I shouldn't say anything. But now Troy is the first student to say, ‘Well, if I sort of have a heart for them or I care for them, then I should speak up.’ So, it seems like we're changing.

Additional students shared real life connections, and then Ms. Martin brought students back to the work that they had done to prepare to read “The Diary of Anne Frank.” Students had a series of activities examining photographs, propaganda, and other primary source documents aimed at building their background knowledge of the

Holocaust in their student folders. Ms. Martin reminded the class of the real-life situations that they had discussed:

We went through that in your folders. You have real life situations with the picture of Anne Frank, of the journal. So, we're, I want to continue every day just to explore this and I really do from the bottom of my heart appreciate those students who raised their hand and said, I'm changing, my mind is changing, so thank you to Anton and Troy for sharing from their hearts what they felt about that particular topic.

Although Ms. Martin's vision typically remained in the background to her immediate concerns in the classroom, in this exchange, Ms. Martin took a risk to call on Troy, whom she described as unpredictable, to share his opinion about speaking up or staying silent. The seriousness with which Troy answered the question demonstrated one example of how students were contributing to Ms. Martin's understanding of "authenticity" as they engaged in the critical thinking that Ms. Martin wanted them to develop.

Sharing a significant moment. The next time I visited Ms. Martin's classroom a month later after PARCC testing had ended, the classroom was literally decorated in hearts. The bulletin board in the back corner that had been covered with the consensus placemats was now boarded with the words Relationships, War, Love, and Hope. A title referencing the unit of study was displayed in the middle: "The Power of a Voice" with the subtitle, "A single moment in time that has personal significance for us." Most noticeable were the hand-written pieces of student writing on purple and lavender triangles and yellow, orange, and fuchsia colored hearts. Each piece represented a significant moment for one of Ms. Martin's students. Some told stories of surprises: a new pet or a special event; while most told stories of loss: the death of a loved one; a serious illness, moving away, divorce, and incarceration. After I had a moment to take in

all the student writing spilling out from all corners of the room, Ms. Martin shared with me what had happened in her classroom during the weeks that I had missed. She pointed to the student work stapled to the bulletin board:

This was done last week after, um, uh, we did this in the midst of reading this letter right here from a Japanese, someone in the Japanese internment camp. This one right here from a little girl in the Japanese internment camp. And then Malala, Malala's speech. We had to read that. So that's what this is all stemming from the readings also combined with Anne Frank, hearing those voices. Is it better to speak up or be silent?

On the other wall of the classroom were poems, letters, and quotations and calls to action on themes such as survival, change, inspiration, courage, and power. One poem was titled, "Action and Apathy." One letter implored President Trump to make the amount of abuse in the world go away. Ms. Martin explained that her students wrote these in response to reading Malala's speech. She said:

They just looked at those things of strength, courage, and wrote a poem or a tweet, or I gave them the option of, I only had a few of those whiteboards, some of them wanted to write their tweets on the whiteboard or designs on a whiteboard in response to survival.

Ms. Martin went on to describe the influence of the literature on students over the past few weeks, "So they've had time to think of this power of a voice. And so, what you see is a result of everything up here as far as literature, including the play." At that point, I noted that there were many different types of paper on the bulletin board and asked whether students had selected their own piece of paper or if Ms. Martin had given them the paper. Pointing to a triangle, Ms. Martin went on to explain how the bulletin board had come to be covered in different shapes:

I chose this. And then after first period, this was all first period's are the ones, if you want to focus on first period's, they're all triangle. And after I saw them up there, I'm like, 'You guys, what can we do to make our board better?' And then the next period chose hearts. They said, 'Why don't you do hearts, Ms. Martin?',

because I told them I didn't like this and they all sat and cut out hearts and then this class (Period 1) got jealous. 'Why did we have to have the such and such, and we didn't have the hearts?' They chose the hearts. They chose the pace of class. I had to omit lessons, one lesson for one class because they said, 'Well, we want to talk about our significant moment' and that's it for this period. And tears, three to four students leaving the classroom because it was too much.

Ms. Martin went on to describe how this sharing session played out each period, with several students overcome with emotion while sharing their significant moment. Some left the classroom but came back to finish telling their stories. This experience had been one that unified the class and led to even more writing and sharing. Although Ms. Martin had just described how she had opened up this opportunity for what she called "awesome, awesome writing," and how she had shared power with students, making time and space for them to enact their own vision for sharing their "significant moment," Ms. Martin attributed students' responses to the curricular focus and to the influence of the literature students had read rather than to her role. She said, "I'm like, why did the curriculum even think of this? But we have our themes here. You see love, war, relationships, hope, so this gives you a better picture of what we're doing." She went on to acknowledge the hard topics students had shared. She said, "[T]hese are the topics that they say they want to write about. So, I'm being very sensitive to that." In thinking about what was going to happen next as Ms. Martin contemplated moving them into their formal writing task, she said, "So, it's been awesome, awesome writing. Now, it's just getting them to work on this cumulative task."

Sharing snapshot memoirs. As has been previously described, making the transition from the freewriting and sharing of "hearts" to the culminating writing task was challenging for both Ms. Martin and her students. However, Ms. Martin continued to

make time and space for students to bring these stories forward through sharing sessions during all phases of the writing process. She remarked that providing students with this time to share their writing was something that they did all the time not only when pieces were finished. Sharing was a recommended practice in the curriculum, but Ms. Martin's class treated this time with special significance, not simply as a classroom exercise: "The class got quiet. You could hear that on the tape. It was loud before, but 'my friend is talking. You guys be quiet. They're sharing their work'" she described.

During the drafting of the Snapshot Memoirs, Amy shared her plans for her memoir on a common theme of losing a pet. This topic held a place in the middle of the emotional spectrum of tales presented, with the stories of happy surprises at one end of the spectrum and the stories of trauma from the loss of a loved one at the other end. As Amy concluded describing her details, she explained to the class that losing her dog was her first "heartbreaking death experience" and that she had regretted not appreciating her dog or spending enough time with him before he passed away. As she finished, Amy teared up and members of the class came forward to hug her.

Ms. Martin created an environment where students were not afraid "to share their voices." She stated that her intention was to draw students in. She said, "They're sympathetic beings. They are beings that understand hurt; they're beings that understand pain." She said of students' responses to Amy and others in the class:

[t]heir buy-in for me was not as great as their buy in for their peers. The class you saw the last eight minutes of class was a totally different class than you saw for the first 60 minutes. You saw kids listening to each other's story, listening to their voice, sharing the hugs at the end. That's the, that's the, essentially students want to run their own classroom. That's all they want to do. They want to run their own show and they want to do their own thing, and once you give them that power, they'll take over as long as the conditions are fair, as long as you set up a structure in which they can be free, but yet it's not total chaos.

The theme of “sharing our hearts” continued throughout the time that I observed Ms. Martin’s classroom, providing an opportunity for students to speak up, to share their work publicly and hear each other’s voices as they told their stories. Ms. Martin concluded of the power of the impromptu journal writing students had done during the unit:

I really think that that writing would have been better had it been journal writing since the beginning of the school year. They would have done that essay with ease and would have been like, oh, this is an easy essay, Ms. Martin. But I’m thankful that I did start some type of journal writing prior to giving them the, at the beginning, the onset of the unit. That’s what I’m happy about.

The value of journal writing for developing classroom community and creating authenticity for student writing was a significant discovery for Ms. Martin. It was in her use of these expressive forms of writing that Ms. Martin brought some balance back from the emphasis on formal writing assignments that she felt had taken over during the year. This process also brought some clarity to her vision for how this type of writing could benefit her broader goals for authenticity and voice. As she re-envisioned what she might do differently, she intended to begin journal writing at the beginning of the year the following year as a way of smoothing a path for the formal writing required in the curriculum. In this way, enacting her inquiry focus provided some direction for how she might rebalance expressive and prescriptive forms of writing going forward.

Clearing Away the Confusion: Enacting the Teacher’s Role

Ms. Martin wanted to hear students “authentically,” although she was struggling to find the proper balance between a structured approach to teaching writing and one that

honored students' authentic voices. Ms. Martin had frequently expressed her frustration at what she felt was a lack of authenticity which was evidenced in the way that students were dependent on her and particularly on their classmates for completing their work. She explained, "We have a group of children, not just my students but schoolwide, and I think it's a district thing; they like to copy, and it's hard for them to sort of focus on what *I* think." She went on to say that she believed that many students hadn't learned that "thinking is important and meaningful" which she suggested was related to technology. Rather than depending on the "smart student," Ms. Martin wanted her students to think for themselves, produce their own individual writing, and to tell their own story. She emphasized, "It's your story!"

Creating roadblocks. Ms. Martin felt that one of the reasons that students relied so much on others was because the curriculum was confusing. She felt that it was her role as the teacher to clear away that confusion by removing roadblocks and finding the right tools to put in place so that students could be self-reliant. Ms. Martin had stated during our first interview that she envisioned finding or making the perfect graphic organizer that would support students so that they could be independently successful with writing tasks.

There were several instances when the tool that Ms. Martin developed or provided to students actually created roadblocks rather than removed them during the writing process. The design of the consensus placemat, for example, had not facilitated the individual thoughtful writing time that Ms. Martin had envisioned. With her goal of independence during the writing workshop for the snapshot memoir, Ms. Martin created a

“Snapshot Memoir Planning Sheet” with the following list of prompts which included the explicit elements of the “snapshot” in order to guide students’ brainstorming:

- Working title
- Purpose of your memoir
- The one memory and related details
- One or two main people (give details about each person)
- and Where you plan to end the memoir and why you chose that point.

Notably absent was the connection to the theme of speaking up or staying silent. At the bottom of the sheet Ms. Martin had added a traditional plot chart which referred to rising and falling action as well as to protagonist and antagonist which she included because “the curriculum would like for them to do it like a plot chart.”

Ms. Martin modeled her own story about the time that she didn’t speak up about something that she had done that put her baby brother at risk of suffocating when she was a little girl. Her model followed the elements that she had listed on the planning sheet minus the plot chart. Then she gave students time in class to work through their own planning. The planning sheet, like other graphic organizers that Ms. Martin used, was intended to facilitate student independence; however, during the period, students asked questions about how to use the sheet, what terms meant, or where they were supposed to be putting their content, rather than focusing their efforts on brainstorming or recording their events.

The organization of the planning sheet also directed students to work on aspects of the story that Ms. Martin did not intend as the focus of the workshop time that day, such as the “working title.” Also, because Ms. Martin had added the plot chart to the bottom of the organizer, she omitted space for students to “get those details down” which was what she envisioned that they would focus on. Several students stopped her to ask

questions about the chart or to comment about not having enough room to write the events. For example:

- Student: We have to legit write the points on here? (points to the area for writing details)
- Ms. Martin: I wanted you to model what I showed you about my brother on that paper. That's why I typed all that stuff.
- Student: In this small...
- Ms. Martin: That was my mistake. That was my mistake.
- Student: I didn't write that (pointing to the plot chart).
- Ms. Martin: Yeah. Yeah. That, that's strictly my mistake. I should not have put that plot chart on there. But um, if you want a separate sheet of paper, lined sheet, here. So, by the time you do your rough draft, they'll just flow.
- Student: This an essay?

Ms. Martin wanted to make the transition from informal writing to formal writing seamless for students; however, as was evident in this exchange, students had been conditioned to respond in a particular way to the cues that let them know when they were writing “an essay.” Because Ms. Martin had attempted a more authentic approach to getting to “the gut” before bringing out the formal writing assignment, students were surprised to learn that they were working on a formal piece of writing.

In reflecting on the lesson afterwards, Ms. Martin concluded that she hadn't thought about the plot chart impeding students' ability to plan their memoir. She stated, “That was just strictly from the curriculum. It's just the curriculum worksheet that they were supposed to receive today. That's all I did. I, I wasn't even thinking that.”

She further explained what she had been trying to accomplish through her role and her approach:

I think I wanted it to free the students more to be able to write about their topic with so much, without so much assistance from me. That's all, sort of make them independent. I really thought it would be. I really thought it would be like this was last week (pointing to the writing on the bulletin board) where the kids were still

focused and totally engaged in their particular topic. I really thought it was going to go like this did. It wasn't. It was still that back and forth. And as I told you, I told them when they see this task right here, when they see that right there. 'Oh no,' it's, it's a shutdown. So, I gave them this last week without showing them this (points to the prompt) and I got all of this today. It's sort of, it's like their shut down time. 'We got to unlock another prompt. We have to do this,' but I just want to get them back to where we focus on our story and getting it on paper, no matter how taxing it may be.

This explanation illustrated the disconnect Ms. Martin experienced between her desire for students to be able to write authentically and independently and her sense of responsibility to adhere to the expectations for formal writing put forth in the District curriculum guide. She had set the groundwork for meeting her students' needs, but requirements from the curriculum guide and adherence to the schoolwide model for unlocking the writing prompt resulted in the "shutdown" and confusion that she had tried to prevent. Ms. Martin concluded that she needed to try another method to facilitate the independence and willingness to work on getting that voice out and onto the paper that she was striving for:

As far as the plot chart, I'm going to go home tonight and figure out if even if I have to use it and what creative way I can use it to help everyone guide their stories because they're going to all come up with the same excuse. 'I don't know. I don't know.' The events are still there, so I will just give them, create a graphic organizer tonight where they can list the events in their story and take those events and start molding them into a full-blown essay or reflection. I think that'll help better than looking at a plot chart and trying to find my paragraphs in a plot chart.

This reflection resulted in a significant point of action for Ms. Martin as she took a stance on the curriculum guide and made the decision to change the graphic organizer that students were using that had unnecessarily complicated students' writing process.

Listening authentically. When focusing on her role in the classroom and areas that she knew she needed to work on, Ms. Martin readily admitted to struggling with organization and structure as a teacher. She did, however, recognize her strengths as her ability to listen purposefully to “hone in” and hear her students. She thought that by listening, she could help them organize and structure their own thinking in less restrictive ways than she felt were advocated by the curriculum. Ms. Martin enacted this vision through her dialogues with students about their writing during the writing process. She theorized that if she were able to really listen to what students were trying to say, as a reader and authentic audience of writing rather than as a critic, she could help students to find and depend on their voices.

Ms. Martin enacted this vision in her classroom during what she referred to as “pacing” while students were participating in a kind of “lose” writer’s workshop time. Although Ms. Martin encountered many questions about how to use the planning sheet during the first day students were working on their snapshot memoir, when I returned on the third day when the class was interrupted 11 times, students were involved in the drafting stage of their writing task. Before releasing students to begin working on their drafts, Ms. Martin shared an “aha moment” that she had to her class. She related how she had told students to think of the audience while creating their stories, and one of her students told Ms. Martin, “I’m not writing for anyone. I’m not writing for an audience of people.” Ms. Martin then shared with her, “Your audience could be your mom. It could be me. I am a reader. You want your readers to feel that they are there, that they are in the moment with you.” Ms. Martin shared with me that she wished she would have been saying that since the beginning of the year because it had not occurred to her that her

students had an abstract vision of audience “like you’re going to perform at a concert, you know? They’re thinking of this huge audience.” She went on, “Audience can be intimate. It can be one or two, so yes, that’s, that’s very important...Because a lot of times I’ll tell them without thinking, ‘oh, your paper is going to be judged by the District. So, make sure you...’ and that’s not me giving them the opportunity to write authentically.”

During the class period, Ms. Martin paced around the room responding to students who wanted her to read their writing. Ms. Martin explained that her intention during her “pacing” was classroom management and accountability. This rationale was consistent with her orientation for prioritizing the immediate-concerns in her classroom, which in this case was avoiding behavior problems while students were engage in independent writing. Although she was motivated by these concerns for classroom management, it was during these exchanges between Ms. Martin and individual students that she also listened to students’ voices authentically. When I probed this idea of “authenticity” with her further during our final interview when Ms. Martin was reflecting on her own writing from the BWP Summer Institute, she had very deep personal reasons for wanting to make sure that students felt heard and their writing valued. She explained:

I think the reason that I haven’t freed myself to become the writer that I’d like to be is because I’m always hesitant about is it right or is it wrong? And I was so happy that this (personal writing) was given to me when I was assigned to BWP because it gave me a comfort level of ‘Oh yeah, somebody can help me now. You know what I’m saying? There’s not one friend I have that will sit down with me and go through the fire with me with a writing piece. I don’t have those types of friends. But not only that, I think my confidence before the Writing Project was low because I think since I was a child, my voice was stifled.

I observed Ms. Martin working with students in her “pacing” mode both days that students were beginning their work on the snapshot memoir as well as the day her sixth graders worked on their folktales, as students sought her attention and asked her to read their writing. Ms. Martin had instructed students to work on “painting” and “coloring” their memoirs to add descriptive details. Ms. Martin reminded students of what had happened the day before when the class made recommendations for Amy to add details to her story about losing her dog:

I said, ‘Amy, you have a beautiful painting. Well, now we’re just edging. We’re putting a little bit of edge in it. We’re putting a little bit more so that the reader... Color it more. It’s a pallet...so that we can, the reader can, feel like they’re there.’

Ms. Martin walked around the room reading students’ writing, responding to their questions, and asking them questions. For example:

Student: Is this the best part where I could say his description of how he looked and then the part of the one memory that we had?

Ms. Martin: Yes, because when you say the memory, it would be best for your reader to actually have a physical description of your grandfather so that while you’re sharing the memory, we can get a feel of his face and how his body...yes, yes...”

As has been previously described, some students chose hard topics to write about. While some abandoned them, some students were committed to telling the story even though the process was emotional. One of the students who had held onto a difficult memory was Tariq. Of her classes, Ms. Martin had told me that everyone participated and volunteered except Tariq. His mother had passed away the year before which was information that Ms. Martin had just recently learned. She had been on his case all year for putting his head down, and now that she knew what he was going through, she was giving him his space but noted that she heard him tell his group, “My mom passed and

that's what I'm going to write about." Ms. Martin went by to check on Tariq during the period when she was "pacing" while students worked on their drafts. Tariq had not put any words down on his paper and was sitting silently crying away from his classmates. Ms. Martin asked him if he wanted to change his topic, and he shook his head, to which Ms. Martin replied, "So that means you really want to go in and battle this and receive some healing from this." Ms. Martin reflected on what prompted her to make that comment to Tariq at that moment:

That's what writing is. And it was like that for us all last summer, you know, every topic we were given each day. You guys didn't look at our stuff. You didn't grade it, you know what I'm saying. But it was cathartic and it. What did it do? It got us to talk about it...And it was healing for a lot of things, and that's what this is going to be for Tariq.

Ms. Martin credited her experience working in her writing group during the BWP institute with helping her become a more sensitive teacher of writing, she felt. She shared her experience working with the members of her own writing group in the summer as having helped to foster that sensitivity:

We had a great team, but to be able to see that whole thing of caring for that writing we talked about, that was what that experience gave us. When Bria gave me her writing, when Justin gave me his writing. We were just as sensitive because we knew we were writing from the heart. So, Justin gave me his. I don't really understand a lot, because it was so technical, but I'm doing my best to give him the feedback that he needs, so it's that whole thing of sharing.

She went on to say that the experience "helped heal me as a writer...it's sort of ripped away at that barrier." Ms. Martin wanted students to know that they had something valuable to share. She said, "[T]hat's why I hone in some much on that with all the things. Your voice is still your voice."

As Ms. Martin looked over the final copies of the snapshot memoirs, including Tariq's who wrote about the loss of his mother: "I did cry, but it took me a while to take it in. But one of the reasons I cried was because I thought about my little sister without my mom in her life. I was like, who's going to teach her to be a woman?", she paused and said:

I'm not going into a preaching mode here. I don't think people see what teachers truly go through in the classroom. We can be by the book if we want to, but someone really has to stand up and erase the rules, erase the lines... (pointing to the paper) I told you those interruptions didn't matter. I got good writing. This is not good writing for other English teachers. This is perfect for me. If I was a judge, and I was doing a district writing assessment and this one got passed on my desk, what horrible score would I give it as a judgment? I don't know this kid. I don't know how hard it took him. It took him. It took him almost two weeks to get this little paragraph out. It took him tears. It took him everything. There's no way a district writing assessment, I would know that. I'd just go, 'Oh, not this... Here give it to the poor kid,' and 'Is this what the District thought of my heart? It's trampled upon.'

In this reflection, Ms. Martin illustrated the agonizing dilemma that she faced as a teacher of writing between meeting students' needs and preparing students for current and future writing tasks. In this instance, Ms. Martin took a stand and decided to "erase the rules" for Tariq.

As Ms. Martin finished looking over the students' Snapshot Memoirs, including Amy's which had the "color" of "the wind rocking the leaves of the trees" and the "the gray fluffy clouds bunched up together" to describe the day that she buried her dog, that Ms. Martin and the class had worked with her to add, she said:

I don't know what type of English teacher I am, but I love when my kids' voices are rich. I love when I know I can hear their heartbeat through their writing and I definitely felt it; it's like, it's like reading and feeling. It's like when you read a good book and you feel the good book. I could feel her writing. It's like she was right there. It was like a 3-D event.

Although Ms. Martin claimed that she did not know what type of English teacher she was, she had a strong vision for descriptive writing that was informed by her cognitive perspective of writing development. In Ms. Martin's vision, writing development involved learning decision-making skills such as considering others' ideas and problem-solving such as how to create a 3-D effect by "coloring" the writing with language choices. Through listening authentically for students' ideas, Ms. Martin was able to help her students bring forward their "rich" voices in their final Snapshot Memoirs, which both satisfied her vision for students to write authentically while also meeting the curricular expectations for the formal writing assignment.

Becoming a Professional Development Teacher Leader: Enacting Professional Learning and Growth

Ms. Martin made frequent reference to being "in the middle of the water" which was her way of expressing the challenges she experienced seeing and holding on to her vision for authentically hearing students' voice during the school year. She shared with me at our first interview, which was before spring break and at a time when she was in the middle of implementing the county's required literacy task and feeling particularly frazzled what she valued about the summer:

The Writing Project, to be honest with you, and not to be like you guys are great, you guys are great, but the Writing Project over the summer, it was a time for us to actually peek into and be able to do it without being in the water. So, give us a time to reflect on who we are and what we do in the classroom. When you asked me that question (about her vision), you've asked me that while I'm trying to fish in the middle of the water.

Ms. Martin decided during that first interview that being in this research study was part of her vision for her professional growth during the year. She had found in the BWP a way of reconnecting with her passion for research that had renewed her for the current school

year. She decided to be a participant in this research study, she told me, because she thought the commitment would “force” her to be more organized, more reflective, and more able to end the year “strong” from being in “the experience.” When I visited Ms. Martin’s school for observations, Ms. Martin used our pre-observation meetings to talk out her lesson plans and ideas. During the first pre-observation meeting, for example, she shared with me the value that she took from engaging in the pre-observation protocol where I asked her about her plans and intentions for her lesson:

And I need to have you with me every single day I teach because I never talk to people about what I'm doing. I just sorta, I'm like this mad scientist. I never write it down. I just sort of, just sort of have this mad scientist way of doing things. It helps. It's helping me right now.

When we met for the final interview at the end of the year, I shared with Ms. Martin the writing that she had completed in the summer when she set her goals for her professional learning, her inquiry focus, and her plan for her professional development workshop and asked for her thoughts about the metaphor of “being in the water” that she frequently invoked. Reflecting back, she shared how holding onto her teacher vision was challenging:

I think it’s always like that as a teacher, just in general as a teacher, because there are goals you're working towards, but once again, you're out of the water before you dive in. And so, before you take that plunge inside, your planning, this is the goal, this is what you want to see, this is what my kids need to get to. And once you're in it, you really can't see. You know you're going somewhere. And you have forgotten about that great plan you had.

In this description, Ms. Martin provided insight into how her focus on the immediate concerns in her classroom clouded her ability to see “that great plan” she had developed outside of the classroom setting. She went on to explain how she had been able to rise above the water, in a sense, when we met for post-observation discussions which helped

to resurface those visions. Ms. Martin concluded that being in the research study had helped her stay the course during the school year. At the final group interview, she shared with me and the other teachers:

And I told you if it wasn't for me accepting this focus group, I would have been done teaching months ago. Sorry, just would've been cute little work packets (laughter). Seriously, just waiting to get through to the end. So, uh, it's definitely helping to actually see me go all the way under the water, come out, and want to enjoy the sunset.

Ms. Martin had come to the BWP institute looking for a sense of purpose. During the early process of envisioning her inquiry focus for practice, her sights shifted to the specific final goal of the BWP Program of creating and delivering a Teacher Inquiry Workshop for a teacher audience at her school. Ms. Martin was very deliberate in the steps that she took to engage stakeholders and to establish the value of the work that she had been doing in the BWP with her principal and the testing coordinator. When she sat down with her administration, she shared her plan and reported that her principal and testing coordinator directed her next steps:

They were like, 'Oh, this is what our school needs. We need this or that...I showed them my TIW, my notes, what I'm doing, and they definitely wanted for me to focus on that group discussion, but mainly, you know, their thing is data. How is that basically going to help the data?

However, when I asked about whether she had shared the data that she had collected in her classroom with her principal, Ms. Martin explained that she had not. She had seen her PowerPoint at her TIW presentation and then "commanded" that all the new teachers use it in their classrooms. After the workshop, Ms. Martin became an informal mentor to several new teachers in the school. At the end of the year, Ms. Martin concluded that that

experience of working with the new teachers had supported her to enact her inquiry focus and that her principal would now “look at me as a guru, like I know it all.”

Ms. Martin principal had her own specific vision for the outcomes she wanted to see as a result of the new teachers implementing Ms. Martin’s strategies for classroom discussion. Ms. Martin explained her principal’s expectations:

She’s only about data. And she sat down and told me it’s only about data. She just wants to see how to do that so that it enhances or makes the data better. She wants to see improved test scores. That’s just the bottom line.

This was a significant finding in that Ms. Martin’s vision for using classroom discussion for developing student voice had been coopted for her principal’s goals to raise test scores. When I asked Ms. Martin how she thought she was going to contribute to the administration’s vision for raising test scores, Ms. Martin stated,

...once again we’ve been talking about this wonderful voice, have we not, but when it comes to my principal wants data, now I’m going into structure because I need to see on that particular assignment, for that particular PARCC essay, what am I doing to get this classroom discussion going because I don’t think the students are going to have a lot to talk about when it comes to the research-based topics.

Ms. Martin went on to think about how this would work, recalling a literacy task that had focused on zoo animals. She wondered aloud, “How am I going to get this eighth-grade group discussing about animals?” As she envisioned what it would look like to implement the consensus placemat as a schoolwide approach to raising test scores, Ms. Martin stated:

...[I]t becomes a lot more structured now. Now you can’t work outside the box. So yeah, it poses a problem. I think so. I don’t know the answer to that. And they want a method that works for all. So, I’m coming to the table, what I bring better work for Social Studies; it better work for English; it better work for. That’s just not reality.

For Ms. Martin, enacting her vision for her TIW workshop, through the planning, coordination with stakeholders, one-on-one mentoring of the new teachers led to what she envisioned for her professional growth. She was given the position of Teacher Development Coordinator for her school for the following year as well as a special role working with new teachers. This new role, however, also came with an expectation that Ms. Martin help raise her school's test scores which was the opposite of her intention for her letting herself and her students work "outside the box."

Summary

Ms. Martin started the school year having changed her inquiry focus because of a misunderstanding with members of her coaching group only to change it back to using the consensus placemat mid-year. She had a broader vision that came into view through reflections with me during this research study, which she positioned as contributing to her accountability to staying the course and ending the year strong. As testing came to an end, Ms. Martin had more freedom to engage students in writing and discussion that brought forth "powerful" thinking and sharing from their own personal experiences and opinions. Students helped Ms. Martin see the significance of these experiences when she made way for them to use the classroom for developing community through sharing "their hearts" with each other. The students had a challenging time making the transition from informal to formal writing as Ms. Martin presented the Snapshot Memoir as an "essay" that would be evaluated by a district audience. During one-on-one conferences with students, she helped them establish their own purpose for their writing which helped create buy-in and expanded her own sensitivity to students' challenges. Students took

pride in creating their snapshot memoirs; several students in the class asked Ms. Martin to please read over theirs first and then asked her to share them with me.

CHAPTER 7: BARRIERS AND SUPPORTS TO ENACTMENT

In this chapter, I address research question 3., *What are the main supports and barriers teachers experienced during the process of enacting their vision for teaching writing?* Because teachers' visions extended beyond their classroom teaching of writing to include professional development and growth as an educator, I looked more broadly for evidence of barriers and supports across the conditions which were relevant to the phenomenon of study. In this study, barriers are defined as any factors or conditions that interfered with teachers' ability to make progress toward their envisioned changes to their roles or practices through their BWP inquiry work. Supports are defined as any factors that provided assistance or encouragement to teachers' progress toward enacting their inquiry. In this chapter, I discuss the main factors that were present across cases, both inside and outside the classroom, including professional development, inside school as well as outside of school factors for their influence on teachers' progress toward enacting their vision.

It is important to note that in addition to the uniqueness of each teacher's vision and practice as has been presented in each teacher's case chapter, an array of distinctive conditions, resources, and school cultures were revealed within their teaching contexts. Adding to this complexity, each teacher's vision for their inquiry work was nested within what the teachers came to describe during the group interview as their "clear," "core," or "pure vision" which was not always accessible during the school year as a source of "reach" or as point of reference for inspiration or reflection.

Barriers to Enactment

I begin with the teachers' perceptions of barriers in order to establish the layers of constraint that obscured teachers' ability to access potential supports. Although it has also been argued that curricular reforms such as the Common Core Standards may provide opportunities for teacher learning and inspire teachers to reach for new practices ((Frykholm, 2004; Lytle, 2013; Peercy et al., 2017), the literature that has focused on high-stakes accountability climates over the past twenty years supports that teachers often struggle to hold on to their visions within high pressure reform environments (Valli and Buese, 2007). This appeared to be the case for the teachers in this study who all worked in a high need LEA under increased pressure to improve student outcomes. There were days and weeks in the school year when the teachers in this study described losing sight or putting aside that "pure vision" because of the burden of other demands or for the sake of expediency. In these instances, teachers made accommodations that they did not readily recognize as a response to a barrier. Instead, they attributed these adjustments to either "stretching" their visions to accommodate these demands, "pushing through," making practical "tradeoffs," or reflexively sidelining their visions as they went into "survival mode" which they viewed as a necessary move.

District Learning Opportunities Mismatched to Increased Teacher Expectations

While the literature on school change efforts suggests that teachers pay close attention to reform-oriented initiatives at all levels (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Kennedy, 2005; Spillane, 1999; Valli et al., 2008), most studies of reform-oriented contexts have focused on institutional visions while teachers' visions for reform have been ignored (Evans, 1996; Hammerness, 2006). This study addressed this gap in the literature.

Findings of this study indicated a mismatch between teachers' visions for their professional growth to meet increased expectations and the professional learning opportunities provided by the district to meet those demands.

Although the teachers in this study had selected an inquiry focus area during the BWP Summer Institute that was well-aligned and within the scope of the district's literacy reform initiative, which focused on writing in response to reading across all content areas and implementing writing process and writing purposes across content disciplines among other broad goals, the teachers felt that the professional learning opportunities, data-focused training and discussions, and mandated collaborative planning time at the district and school levels did not help them to enact their vision for their own professional growth in the area of implementing writing in their content area during the school year. Simultaneously, they felt that the school and district expectations for student learning outcomes associated with writing and literacy skills had increased, which left an unfilled gap between the district's expectations for their teaching and the preparation they received for understanding and meeting those expectations.

Generic professional development impedes teacher learning. Rather than supportive and specific to their learning needs and teaching contexts, the teachers in this study found the available and often required professional learning experiences at the school and district level to be generic and irrelevant to their professional capabilities. For example, Mr. Fordham described the professional "training" he had received that year through videos and PowerPoint presentations as akin to what you might receive "as a trainee at CVS." He shared this during the group interview to the agreement of both Ms. Buckley and Ms. Martin. Mr. Fordham commented that while the push in the district was

for students to read and think critically, teachers who were “educated adults” were not asked to engage critically themselves in the conceptual work needed to understand the literacy initiative at any depth. He stated, “I think it’s difficult to grow through learning if that’s the way we’re going to do professional development.” Ms. Martin also described the professional development she experienced as lacking substantive opportunities for learning. She shared that “every single [professional development experience] is focused on unlocking the prompt.” She stated that she was looking for more of a focus on higher level thinking that would help students apply their reasoning skills in their writing; “I mean we need more the focus underneath the writing prompt as to how do we get kids to connect to the evidence with the reasoning, you know what I’m saying, or the general ideas, not circle, underline and highlight. It doesn’t make sense.” She further described her frustration with how the professional development she received was not focused on increasing her capacity as a teacher of writing but instead was focused on accountability. “It’s not about writing,” she said, “It’s about the reminder...that has been going on since August.” Similar to Ms. Martin’s experience, Ms. Buckley shared that the professional learning experiences she had come to value in the past with colleagues had been replaced by meetings to deliver mandates that were “by the book” and used to communicate expectations rather than to create opportunities for teachers to grow professionally. She stated that these meetings had taken over the time that would have in the past been used for potentially relevant professional learning where teachers could engage in useful dialogue to address specific strategies. All three teachers described poorly executed professional development that did not meet their needs as learners and that detracted from

time they could have spent developing relevant knowledge that would help them meet their students' needs.

All three teachers had visions of equipping their students with critical thinking and reasoning skills that were aligned with Common Core Standards for 21st Century competencies.⁴ They also recognized that this was an area of growth for them and wanted to further develop their professional skills to make their visions of teaching critical thinking skills actionable. On the last day of the school group interview, all three teachers were still discussing the challenges they encountered trying to activate, teach, and assess critical thinking skills without what they felt were the professional development opportunities to do so effectively. Mr. Fordham described how the professional development that he received to address teaching critical thinking was insufficient:

I feel like they're giving us like a ... Like a little canteen and a flashlight and saying that's all you need to get out of this forest. Like thank you for teaching me to unlock this prompt. But I, you know, I can't see the forest through the trees in this scenario.

As this statement demonstrates, the teachers had envisioned learning experiences that would meet their needs as professionals and viewed the district professional learning experiences as ineffective in contributing to the development of new knowledge, new practices, or new tools that would have helped them deepen their skills for enacting their inquiry focus for developing critical thinking skills and using writing in their classrooms with their students.

⁴ In the common educational language related to preparing students for the 21st Century, 21st Century competencies refer to critical-thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills that enable students to “read, write, speak, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas” for promoting college and career readiness (“English Language Arts Standards”).

Data-driven meetings divert attention from real issues. All the teachers described a culture of meetings in their schools that was “data-driven” with conversations that hinged on how to raise test scores. The extensive use of “collaborative planning” time and faculty meeting times for what Ms. Buckley termed “forced” conversations about schoolwide data were seen by the teachers as another barrier to engaging in what they had in the past valued as meaningful discussions about how to meet their own specific student needs. Ms. Buckley reported that what used to be time for sharing teaching practices had been taken over by “awkward” data discussions leaving no time for discussing “real issues.” She shared of the data discussion protocol, “We *noticed* and we *wondered* until we were blue in the face (emphasis added).” Ms. Martin also reported that her staff was taken out of their classrooms twice during the year to attend what her principal called, “Data University,” in order to pore over all of the school’s data points, not just the ones relevant to her classes, which Ms. Martin found overwhelming. Mr. Fordham noted “...there’s just so many things that they want us to do that I think we could do any one of them really well, but when you throw all of this at us, I’m not going to do any of it well.” Mr. Fordham reported struggling to make use of the data conversations in ways that helped to align with the district expectations and provide him with a specific model to strive for. He said, “It’s like if I want to have a good vision, I can have a fantastic vision if you would just be a little but more, this is what a ninth grader should do, you know?” Ms. Martin followed Mr. Fordham’s comment, “You just asked us about that pure vision and you can see how it’s being drowned. It’s like it becomes blurry.”

All three teachers felt that the focus on data conversations also discredited their wholistic view of students and ignored what it was like to teach “the child sitting in front of you,” as Ms. Buckley described the feeling. Mr. Fordham further argued that there was little space in this data-centered model for professional judgment, and the “intuitive soft touch of teaching.” The three teachers agreed that their professional intuition about how to best teach their own students had been subordinated to “just boil[ing] all the kids down to numbers.”

The findings of this study build on previous research that has demonstrated that implementation of national standards within local contexts presents many contradictions to improving teacher learning experiences, which are their purported intent. Instead of fostering a culture of professionalism, studies of reform implementation in schools demonstrate that teachers are often faced with a culture of compliance that fails to support shifts in practice (Lieberman & Mace, 2008; Valli et al., 2008). The findings of this study indicate that for all three teachers, time spent on “compliance” activities such as attending professional development sessions, participating in data discussions, and attending required collaborative planning meetings operated as a strategy for ensuring that mandates were delivered; however, these experiences did not contribute to teachers’ abilities to implement those mandates effectively. The array of compliance-oriented activities took time and attention away from being able to focus on taking action and doing “one thing well.” As such, the teachers viewed the data-driven culture as a barrier to identifying and enacting practices that would help them address the specific needs of the actual students in their classes.

Being “left alone” creates professional isolation. As teachers who were experienced and respected by their administrators within their schools, all three teachers in this study were “left alone” by their administrators to carry on with their inquiry focus work. They all felt that they had full authority and administrative approval, if not active support, to enact their inquiry as they saw fit; however, there were other dynamics in their schools that left these teachers looking for collegiality and professional guidance as they worked toward enacting a professional stance. Compounding their lack of support for enacting their vision of professional learning, all three teachers experienced a lack of professional dialogue with a teacher partner to work through ideas and problems. Mr. Fordham frequently referred to his feelings of “being the lone guy in the shack in the parking lot,” vacillating between confidence and self-doubt. He said of wanting instructional mentoring and collegial exchange:

I'm honestly a lot more comfortable where I can honestly look around and say, 'Yeah, I'm not the one doing it right, but I can learn from others.' And I think I'm at the point where I just don't feel there's someone I can look to and say, 'Help me understand how to do this, or can I come and watch you and see how you do it?' You know, I don't feel there's anyone left like that for me to kind of really look at in my department.

He reported that even his closest friend and mentor, while verbally supportive, said she could never do what he was trying to do with building his content around literacy goals. Mr. Fordham said of his desire to keep fine-tuning his six-step cycle to address the weaknesses he had identified, “...[I]f I just had people to help kind of get the rest of this put together, I can start tackling all these other issues.” Instead, he reported eye-rolling during meetings and receiving “a lot of pushback from particular teachers, and I've never had that where teachers were just pretty much trying to undermine what you're doing.”

For Ms. Martin, not having a collegial relationship meant being on her own “island” trying to figure out how to channel what she referred to as her “mad scientist” approach into something that was rehearsed and ready for the classroom. She described how the other eighth- grade English teacher taught only Honors classes which was “a whole different type of curriculum.” She explained they were “forced” to meet to plan. Ms. Martin said, “All we're doing is saying, ‘Well, what are you doing?’ ‘This is what I'm doing, and this is what you're doing,’ but we're not necessarily bringing what we're doing together.” At the conclusion of those meetings, Ms. Martin explained, “We write it on the report, and have our candy and our M&M’s, and then we move on,” which did not help her to be a better teacher of writing. Ms. Buckley experienced professional isolation as a side effect of the poor communication in her school and constant stream of mandated tasks that created tension between staff members and left little opportunity for co-planning even though she was a member of two teams, a grade level team and content team. She said of having time to discuss her students with their other teachers, “We really don't have those conversations, unfortunately. Everyone's kind of in their own lane even though we teach the same set of students.” Similar to Ms. Martin, Ms. Buckley also reported going through the motions of collaborative planning and filling out an accountability form that “had nothing really to do with what we were doing in the classroom.” She explained that she missed opportunities for relevant professional discussions that would focus on “How are you going to implement this strategy? Um, what about this goal?” Ms. Buckley did not even attempt to deliver her professional development workshop at her own school for fear that people would not show up which was another indicator of the lack of collegiality at her school.

Historically, school conditions have created barriers to collaboration and contributed to a school culture that remains oriented towards “going it alone” rather than supporting a culture of professional learning and collaboration (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, Westheimer, 2008). Studies support that professional learning communities within schools may contribute positively to teacher learning, instructional improvement, and improved student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, & McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Lieberman & Mace, 2008; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Westheimer, 2008). This study contributes to the existing research on the culture of collegial learning opportunities within the current reform-oriented climate. While in recent years there has been a shift toward forming professional learning communities within schools, which are considered to be well-suited to supporting the complexity of teacher learning needs in the context of reform initiatives (Darling-Hammond, & McLaughlin, 2011; Lieberman & Mace, 2008; Westheimer, 2008), the findings of this study indicate that “collaborative planning” time was used solely for accountability purposes and did not result in community learning or individual professional development. All three teachers were frustrated by these missed opportunities, which coupled with a lack of professional development during the school year, operated as a barrier to their own vision for their professional learning and growth.

District Literacy Initiative Obscures Developing a Vision of “Good Writing”

This study builds upon previous work on teacher vision across a wide spectrum of teacher experiences which focused on the relationship between teacher vision and school context (Grossman et al., 2000; Hammerness, 2006; McElhone et al., 2009). According to the literature, the perceived gap between teacher vision and school context may be highly

influential as a support or barrier, experienced either as a motivator for new learning or abandonment of effort (Grossman et al, 2000; Hammerness, 1999, 2006; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Squires & Bliss, 2004). This body of literature has focused on how alignment across these factors contributes significantly to teachers' professional agency, persistence, and feelings of success (Grossman et al., 2000; Hammerness, 2006; McElhone et al., 2009). My findings make a specific contribution to our understanding of the role of institutional reform-oriented initiatives which operated as a specific contextual element. Through my analysis, I found that while teachers were striving to work within general goals and expectations for literacy improvement within the Districts' reform-orientated writing initiative, a lack of systemic vision of "good writing" operated as a barrier to teachers' ability to access and enact their own visions of good writing instruction.

Although the countywide literacy initiative guided schoolwide priorities and influenced the professional mandates that teachers viewed as a substitute for true professional learning, the teachers in this study had only a vague sense of the overarching vision for the District's literacy initiative. They expressed frustration and a lack of authority over the implementation that presented as a barrier to enacting that "pure vision" of the role that they wanted writing to play in their classrooms that they could see in the summer. Even Mr. Fordham who claimed that the Common Core State Standards changed his vision for his teaching and thought that the district documents were being created "by some pretty smart people," described the actual implementation of the initiative through top-down directives as "get[ting] muddy really quick, like really quick."

The teachers' understanding of how the literacy initiative served specific goals in the district or in their schools or could help inform their work to improve writing in their classrooms with their students could best be described as fuzzy. When speaking of the literacy initiative, for example, the teachers often could not recall the name of associated tasks or explain how the student responses that were being collected were being used to assess specific learning goals, to inform school improvement, or to address specific student's learning needs even with all of the "data conversations" they participated in. Mr. Fordham could explain specifics about the Common Core State Standards but not the relationship to the district literacy initiative. He said, "A lot of what I do is actually in being mindful of what the literacy reform initiatives *kind of are* (emphasis added). I can never remember any of the words they use to describe things because there's just a lot." He also said, "Like I want to understand those, but off the top of my head, I can't think of what the district's literacy tasks or goals are." Ms. Martin did not know how students' responses were being used. She said, "We have to pull writing, give it to the department head for a particular writing assignment...I should have that name by now." At Ms. Buckley's school, a literacy coach and another person whose title she did not know oversaw administration of the literacy tasks while Ms. Buckley felt her principal's "hands were tied," thus leaving the teacher in the school out of discussions about implementation. She commented that the literacy coaches collected writing samples from pre-selected students; however, no data was shared with her from those collected responses.

The two eighth-grade middle school teachers referenced the district mandated literacy task, which was the one concrete element of the literacy initiative that all the

teachers brought up, as a barrier to their enactment of their ideal teaching practices in the classroom that required them to put aside that “pure vision.” Mr. Fordham also found the high school literacy tasks poorly written and frustrating to implement; however, he did not experience the same impediment that Ms. Buckley and Ms. Martin did because he had not been required to administer a literacy task at all that year. However, Ms. Buckley and Ms. Martin described being responsible for teaching students to create a specific written response through a series of materials, texts, and scripted procedures that they did not have control over. The tasks were administered through content areas and were discipline-specific, according to the teachers, but not coordinated to match up with their curricular content. Ms. Buckley also felt out of her element trying to teach the literacy task that was required for Social Studies during the month of November, which she referred to as “Hostile Takeover Month.” She reported going to meet with the literacy coaches beforehand as a united front with her Social Studies co-chair to advocate for how their department wanted to approach their writing task through teaching the students to analyze ethos, pathos, and logos as they had done successfully in the past. She reported:

And then this year, they said we couldn’t do that, and we had to use this paragraph long thesis that the county came up with, and I’m like, I don’t understand this, and I have two college degrees.

This statement illustrated a common experience among the teachers of trying to implement a mandated writing assignment while not understanding the purpose or theory that informed the District’s approach. In this assignment, writing was presented as a task to be executed and not as a process of making meaning, which confounded teachers’ efforts to empower their students as independent writers and thinkers. Ms. Martin also shared that her students were required to use a thesis statement provided by the District

which she found perplexing. She wondered why they were not encouraging students to create their own thesis statement, stating “It’s that whole thing with writing. It’s not Cracker Jack.” To which Ms. Buckley replied, “It’s not a one-size-fits-all.” Ms. Martin finished their thoughts, “And that’s how they go about the literacy task.” For these two teachers, implementing the literacy task triggered “survival mode” as they put their visions for their teaching of good writing on hold to get through it.

All three teachers felt that the literacy initiative was removed from their teaching and that it created a classroom experience that resulted in a negative effect on students’ attitudes and expectations of writing. The middle school teachers felt the literacy task presented a barrier to their vision of teachers and students experiencing authentic writing that addressed individual student needs and stood in the way of a common understanding of what “good writing” could look like. This finding supports earlier studies of classroom writing instruction that suggest that even when teachers have a sophisticated understanding of the writing process, test-taking pressures acts as barriers to teachers engaging in those practices (Applebee & Langer, 2011). Additionally, as has been found in other studies, the findings of this study suggest that the emphasis on raising standardized test scores reinforced formulaic approaches to writing, such as utilizing a prescribed thesis statement, that were driven by test-taking practices and not by best practices (Applebee & Langer, 2011). The emphasis on test-taking practices associated with the literacy task over understanding characteristics of good writing operated as a barrier to engaging students in generative writing experiences and process-oriented approaches that would help them to improve as writers.

The Ubiquity of Technology Operates as a Blessing and a Curse

One factor that defied categorization as strictly a barrier or a support was the ubiquitous role of technology in the lives of their students. Mr. Fordham was driven by the potential of technology to create his video essay assignment; Ms. Martin used computer access as a reward with her students; Ms. Buckley felt that technology enhanced teaching and learning but also expressed a dilemma that all three teachers referred to when she described students' use of technology as both "a blessing and a curse." All three teachers cited the influence of technology and particularly cellphones as contributing to a decline in an array of student dispositions and skills including attention, persistence, careful reading, and basic writing skills. Mr. Fordham described his students as being overwhelmed, distracted, and lacking basic technology know-how that they should have already learned. Ms. Buckley saw basic writing skills and proofreading as being a challenge for students because of the influence of texting and claimed this was "across the board. That's with my ESOL kids, that's with my Gen Ed kids, that's with the Honors kids" and which she characterized as becoming more and more of a problem over the years that she had been teaching. Ms. Martin commented on how students didn't know the power of writing in silence and thinking because they were too used to "things coming at them" to be able to focus.

These beliefs served as a *blind spot* in teachers' visions for students' learning. Although the teachers made reference to a wide range of differences among individual students within their classrooms including cultural differences and showed sensitivity and care for students' personal struggles; in general, they made little mention of any specific methods of differentiation related to their inquiry, or to differentiation in general, that

were used in any formal or systematic way. As I was focused on trying to understand what this meant for teaching, learning, and evaluating writing in their classrooms, I identified a perspective that they all held of their students as the “Google-It Generation,” as Ms. Buckley referred to them, that appeared to obscure their vision to student learning differences related to writing. All three teachers expressed a concern over what Mr. Fordham described as students seeking “the path of least resistance,” which was often linked to a dependence on their personal devices and technology resources such as Google. The teachers identified technology factors as well as motivational factors, often paired, as barriers to students’ activating their critical thinking skills. When Mr. Fordham, for example, envisioned his ideal role of salon host in his classroom engaging students in discussions around Civil Rights topics that they cared about, he stopped short:

Saying that out loud. It's, ‘Oh my God, they're going to go to Wikipedia.’ They're only going to read the headline of a story. They're going to take out their phones the day of and they're going to be Googling. You know, like I see all those things of the path of least resistance and not being motivated enough on the content to do it. So, like, I think ideally that would be the goal, um, but I would have to have like years of kids totally engaged and willing to do all that work on their own first. And again, I'm, I'm getting ninth graders who I don't know if they know how to read at the level they're supposed to. I don't know if they know how to write at the level they're supposed to do. So yeah, ideally at the end of the year to get more like that. But yeah, honestly, I don't know how to do it. I, I don't know how to do it.

In this example, Mr. Fordham’s beliefs about students’ lack of motivation was a barrier to enacting his vision for creating a more democratic classroom community. Ms. Buckley also reported her belief that students had become lazy due to technology, citing a lack of punctuation in some of the final Capstone Projects as evidence of this decline. Ms. Martin also spoke of her belief that students were “too tooled up” to focus on one thing at a time and to fully participate in quiet thinking, which she used to support her belief that

students were dependent on each other to complete their work. These beliefs about students' writing challenges operated as a barrier to teachers being able to see evidence of students' writing abilities.

The teachers had radically different access to technology resources in their school as well as different policies and school norms for using technology. However, they all engaged in what could best be described as deficit discourse about their students' use of technology, painted in broad terms. They spoke of the influence of technology as a generational phenomenon that was confounding and concerning but largely outside of their control. In general, this broad view of the "Google It" generation presented as a barrier to teachers' thoughtful examination of their own beliefs and assumptions about students' capacities as writers which clouded their vision of their students' capabilities as writers.

These findings build on the research on how vision statements may reveal *blind spots* in teachers' visions (Hammerness, 2003; Turner, 2007). Turner (2007) found that pre-service teachers held conflicting views of professional practice that exposed their lack of understanding of culturally responsive teaching practices. This finding provides specific insights into how teachers' unexamined generalized beliefs about students may undermine their own intentions for reaching for their visions. The teachers' beliefs about the "Google It" generation operated as a blind spot to teachers' recognition of linguistic, cultural, and learning differences or assets that could be used for developing their students' writing competencies. Although the teachers rejected what they described as the tendency within their data discussions to ignore individual students' needs, this blind spot also stood in the way of teachers' developing visions for their students' individual

development as writers. I contend that this finding warrants further research as the teachers in this study are clearly not alone in holding this perspective. Even though they were thoughtful, reflective, and caring practitioners, they were unaware of the influence of this perspective on their beliefs and their decision-making. Further studies are needed that focus specifically on the impact of this phenomenon on writing instruction differentiation and student learning outcomes.

Supports to Enactment

Due to the barriers teachers experienced within the layers of their school and district contexts and the adaptations that they naturally made to keep their visions in sight or to protect their visions from outside influences, teachers had difficulty identifying specific supports that they had experienced or might have taken advantage of to clear a path to enact that “pure vision” that they could see in the summer when they were in the BWP Summer Institute. Most of the supports that teachers identified during post-observation interviews actually occurred during the conceptualization process in the BWP Summer Institute as they interrogated and articulated their ideas into a plan of action when they were “out of the water” as Ms. Martin liked to say, including the support of their writing groups as well as the influence of other educators’ Teacher Inquiry Workshops (TIW’s) and recommended resources including books, podcasts, and collegial discussions. The teachers specifically referenced the process of putting their inquiry plan into writing and tapping into their own passions as learners as a support which has been described in each teacher’s case chapter.

Fellow Teachers in the BWP Institute Provide Sustaining Comradery

Studies on effective professional development stress the need for opportunities that are sustained and continuous with models that promote social interaction such as modeling, coaching, and collective-problem solving (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hawley & Valli, 2007; Lieberman & Mace, 2008). Although researchers have focused on how social resources shared within communities may contribute to productive learning and changed teaching practices, (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Grossman et al., 2001; Peercy et al., 2017; Spillane, 1999; Westheimer, 2008), the literature does not distinguish between the type of social support that benefits teachers during the summer when they are away from their classroom context as compared to the type of social support necessitated during the school year in the midst of implementing reform-oriented practices. The findings of this study suggest that teachers require different types of support from their professional communities when they are outside looking into their practice than when they are in the “middle of the water” of teaching.

The teachers in this study made broad statements about “enjoying” or finding course work “not a burden” during the school year as Ms. Buckley stated, yet the support from being in the BWP program during the school year was limited to comradery. For example, Ms. Buckley said of the fall semester course, “So I do think it helped to a certain extent. I just know I was really, really, really stressed out.” Ms. Martin explained how “consistently meeting and discussing it and rehearsing it, and revisiting it for the whole school year, which we don’t do as teachers” was a supportive practice. With the exception of feedback on their TIW practice presentations in February, when all teachers

presented a 45-minute rehearsal of the workshop that they were planning to deliver to an audience of other teachers from the cohort, the teachers in this study made little reference to any specific interactions or resources within the BWP program during the school year. This was notable in that the BWP program, including classroom meetings and coaching groups, continued with the same cohort of teachers on almost a weekly basis for 20 meetings from September to March as teachers were engaged in enacting their inquiry plan and then moving into preparing a professional development workshop for a teacher audience in the spring.

The school year BWP meetings included many opportunities for collegial sharing and troubleshooting with other educators which had been viewed as a source of inspiration during the summer. The three teachers in this study were always present at these meetings. Mr. Fordham reported valuing the meetings for the “energy” he got from them when he was exhausted from his teaching responsibilities. Ms. Martin went so far as to call a cab to make it to one of the TIW practice meetings in the winter when her car broke down at her school. Ms. Buckley reported standing outside in the parking lot after 3-hour classes to finish conversations with other teachers in the cohort. However, the teachers made little reference during the time of the study, in general, to any kind of specific support for their instructional decisions from these meetings or from any other sources. Mr. Fordham stated at the focus group meeting, by way of example, that he didn’t feel he had barriers in his own classroom but he also didn’t feel he had many supports for his greater goal of convincing other Social Studies teachers to “get on board” with implementing argument writing or other Common Core approaches in their classrooms. He explained a practical view of his own classroom domain that all three

teachers seemed to embrace: “But for me, it literally was just kind of, okay, this is what it was. No one is going to stop me. This is what it looks like when I actually got to do it.”

This finding builds on other research that has demonstrated the value of community support in mediating other factors such as the daily tensions associated with teaching within policy mandates (Spillane, 1999). The BWP community helped the teachers in this study stay the course and provided an outlet from the daily demands of teaching. This study contributes to the literature by providing insight into the distinct ways that teachers utilized community support differently in the summer than they did during the school year. The findings suggest that while teachers felt grounded to persist with their inquiry work within accountability contexts, they did not turn to the learning community as a source for collaborative problem-solving when confronted with instructional problems during the school year. I contend that teachers put forward visions for their practice in the summer that were conceptual and idealized that made collaborative discourse a comfortable and relevant community learning practice. During the school year, however, teachers brought forward more practical, unique, and specific visions of practice embedded within contextual layers, and therefore did not turn to collaborative discourse with teachers from other schools as a problem-solving practice. While sharing with other teachers provided comradery and “energy,” it did not help teachers resolve specific instructional dilemmas. This finding warrants further research into the relationship between individual and collective vision within community-based professional learning for a better understanding of how teachers might find common ground for contextualized problem-solving as a sustaining support for improved practice during the school year.

Teachers Access Learning through Persistent Trying, Reflecting, and Re-envisioning

In the absence of collegial planning opportunities and meaningful professional development within their schools, the teachers in this study relied on their own tolerance for the inquiry process itself as a method of learning. They all spoke of how they had tried, failed, and tried again to enact their ideas in small as well as more significant ways. Ms. Buckley said, “I was trying to like teach myself based off, like my first period is always like my test class.” Each spoke during post-observation interviews of plans to make immediate adjustments to their teaching based on what happened during their first period classes, for example. Ms. Martin revamped the Snapshot Memoir Planning Sheet in between classes to derive a version that was more successful at capturing students’ rich details with afternoon classes that same day, as well as remaking the hearts bulletin board with her students to better reflect the significance of students’ significant moments. Ms. Buckley anticipated multiple iterations of her debate activities from the very beginning; her research plan even included a “trial run” debate where she collected student feedback as the first point of her inquiry plan. She tweaked the debate model three times, clarifying the purpose, roles, and responsibilities each time, until she felt students were fully participating and accountable to their learning as she had intended. Mr. Fordham, who was the most vocal about his expectations for learning from failure, used what he learned from the first video essay assignment to revamp the requirements for a repeat assignment, minus the video aspect, as a final exam. Considering the number of complaints Mr. Fordham reported receiving from students who struggled with the requirements, including an email from a student proclaiming that the project had “ruined his life,” Mr.

Fordham persisted through what for him was an emotionally taxing experience to realize much better success at the end of the year.

Although the teachers in this study used their visions for their inquiry to differing degrees during the school year, they all felt motivated by having gone through the process of conceptualizing and making a commitment to their inquiry focus through writing about it. Mr. Fordham, who was the most driven by his vision, referred to the personal writing that he did in the summer as having helped him to uncover his convictions about the need to explicitly teach 21st Century literacy skills. He stated that his personal piece of writing became a “bible” for his school year. With her practice-centered approach, Ms. Buckley followed her plan with fidelity and even expanded her initial ideas to include additional debates during the year. Although there were many interruptions to her plans, she kept refining her inquiry focus throughout the year as she saw evidence of student growth. Ms. Martin’s focus evolved and changed but she stayed the course with her plan for developing her TIW which was a highlight of her year and served as a reminder of that pure vision that she had in the summer. The teachers in this study reported feeling supported to keep reaching for their visions by developing inquiry questions, conceptualizing their ideas, and continuing to refine those ideas during the school year. In this way, having the flexibility to revise and refine their inquiry as their visions became more actionable was a form of professional learning that supported their enactment efforts.

Students’ Needs and Successes Provide Teachers with Reflective Opportunities

Student learning has been identified as the primary factor supporting and motivating instructional change efforts (Kennedy, 2005; Spillane, 1999). Research on

teacher vision has demonstrated how visions may serve as a guide for strengthening teachers' stances toward their own authority as knowers and advocates for their students' needs (Vaughn & Faircloth, 2013; Parsons & La Croix, 2013; Whitcomb, 2004). While the literature on teacher vision has focused on how teachers' broad instructional visions have guided their actions in pushing back on curricular mandates, my findings suggest that individual student cases play an important role in providing teachers with the specific feedback and motivation to reach for and measure their progress toward their instructional visions that served as a support.

The teachers in this study described the difficulty of tracing the specific influence of their inquiry focus work on student learning, yet they all shared stories of a particular student in their classes that seemed to symbolize the dilemma or challenge that they were trying to address through their inquiry. The teachers brought these students up repeatedly when they were describing their intentions for their actions, their concerns about how a lesson would go, or as an example of how they were making an adjustment or had come to see glimmers of "success" through the inquiry approach that they were enacting.

Desmond. Mr. Fordham spoke frequently of a student in his on-grade level class named Desmond. Mr. Fordham described Desmond as a student who was always frustrated with the work in Mr. Fordham's class. Mr. Fordham reported frequently catching Desmond on his phone or having to speak with him about getting other students off task while they were working. On the day that I observed Mr. Fordham's on-grade level class during their discussion of Civil Rights' tactics and legacy, there was one student who Mr. Fordham directed to "get to work," and that was Desmond. Mr. Fordham reported working with both Desmond and his father, including providing

afterschool help, and generally giving him “extra chances” to be successful. In Desmond’s struggles in his class, Mr. Fordham saw the educational inequity that was the motivation and moral obligation for shifting his focus to literacy skills. According to Mr. Fordham, Desmond had been passed along in middle school only to arrive in high school unprepared for the work. He referred more than once to the day that Desmond shared his own frustration with Mr. Fordham over his lack of preparation. Mr. Fordham said:

He's like, ‘This is so much harder for me because last year, all I got was worksheets.’ I'm like ‘What do you mean?’ And he's like, ‘The teacher just literally gave us worksheets. And, you know, fill in the blank, I got the answers from other people. And, what you are doing, I don't know how to do.’ I'm like, ‘What part? Do you know how to read?’ He's like, ‘Yeah, I know how to read, but I don't, but what you are asking me to do with this stuff, I don't. I get frustrated, I don't get it.’

At the end of the year, Mr. Fordham showed me Desmond’s paper on the Civil Rights’ tactics and legacy, explaining that at the beginning of the year, he wouldn't write a single sentence. The paper, while not as developed as others in his on-grade level class, was a cohesive paragraph that included evidence. Mr. Fordham noted that Desmond didn’t have everything he needed in the response, but that it represented growth and a solid effort for him “even though he was on his phone the entire time and talking and giggling, he got something expressed which is good.”

Daniel. Ms. Buckley was particularly tuned to her students’ engagement in her lessons as a method of evaluating how she was doing and reported making changes to her plans based on student feedback, as has been described in the section on her tolerance for the inquiry process. In thinking about the value of implementing debate strategies with her students, Ms. Buckley frequently brought up Daniel, a student who had a gift for debate but was often overzealous and controlling of his teammates and who dominated

debate preparations. Ms. Buckley could see how debate unlocked Daniel's passion and provided a platform for his talents, which helped confirm her theory about how debate strategies could be used in service of student learning. However, Daniel's lack of regard for his teammates as collaborators was something that she had not anticipated in her selection of her inquiry focus. For Ms. Buckley, Daniel represented a different type of "opinionated" student than what she had envisioned. She noted that he thought everyone should think like him and be as passionate as he was. Because of Daniel's takeover of his team members' roles and his "meltdown" over losing the debate, Ms. Buckley developed a series of reflective opportunities for students to consider their contribution, their team's coordination, and how their thinking about the debate issue had changed due to their work on the debate. Because of her focus on Daniel, she refined her approach to students' participation in debate to include metacognitive and reflective writing pieces. While this did not bring about a transformation, by the end of the year, Daniel had made progress in recognizing how he himself had contributed to his team's loss by not allowing his teammates to do their part. Through trying to understand Daniel's needs as a learner, Ms. Buckley challenged her assumptions about a generalization that she had held about her students as "opinionated."

Tariq. Ms. Martin made frequent reference to Tariq, the student whose mother had died the year before who sat in her classroom most days with his head down not completing any work. Tariq had been disrespectful and had gotten in trouble with Ms. Martin about a month earlier which is when she called home and discovered that Tariq was dealing with the loss of his mother. She noted that he had been defiant toward her all year, and she frequently argued with him about lifting his head and getting started. She

wondered why nobody told her that his mom had passed and wished that she had known what he had been going through. On the day that students were working on their snapshot memoirs, Ms. Martin focused on helping Tariq see a purpose for his decision to write about losing his mom when she told him that he must want to receive healing from the act of writing his story. In thinking about how to let the writing serve a purpose for Tariq, Ms. Martin gained some clarity about her own purpose for wanting to focus on authenticity and students' voices. She said of her students in general, and Tariq, in particular:

It was some serious stuff, and I think that's also what's driving me to be extra sensitive to a lot of their writing because the brainstorm part. Yeah, it was. It was emotional. It's cathartic for a lot of them and it made me realize a lot of their home life and what they go through. It's, it's hard, it's hard, it's hard to be sympathetic to kids who disrespect you, who love you, who will stick up their middle fingers at you. It's hard, but they're going through a lot and it takes someone with thick skin - I'm not that person all the time, - to be able to understand that they're truly going through something.

Tariq told Ms. Martin when he submitted his snapshot memoir that he still wanted to make it better. Ms. Martin decided that she was going to take it and not try to push for him to revise it until he was ready to. She said, "I think he just needed to get it out, and he did."

Although these student cases were mostly unseen as a support, these students provided a mirror for their teachers to reflect on why they were doing what they were doing and how their efforts mattered in ways that encouraged them to stay the course or to feel affirmed for their decisions.

Teachers Access Social Resources as Participants in This Study

Social resources including collegial discussions or "teacher talk," have been found to contribute to productive reflection leading to changed practices (Feiman-

Nemser, 2001; Grossman et al., 2001; Peercy et al., 2017; Spillane, 1999; Westheimer, 2008). In particular, “teacher talk” about practice has been found to help teachers make tacit knowledge more visible and by providing an outlet for examining common assumptions about teaching practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). The findings of this study shed light on how teachers who were lacking social resources within their schools enacted their role for their professional learning through this study and used their participation as a form of supportive accountability that contributed to productive reflection as they engaged in discussions with me about their vision-to-practice process.

Although the teachers in this study reported limited access to social resources for collegial discussion or troubleshooting within their own schools, they viewed their participation in this research study as a form of social support. This question of the role of being in the study was not one that I asked but one that teachers raised during the final moments of the focus group discussion when I asked if there was anything else that they wanted to bring up:

Researcher: Alright. That's great. All right. Any, any thoughts, anything that you want to raise that we didn't discuss?

Mr. Fordham: This type of thing where you actually came in, observed, and then really discussing it. One, I always felt bad for you because I'm like, I'm just going on and on and on.

Ms. Buckley: I thought it was just me.

Mr. Fordham: She was therapy (laughter). She's like my therapist and like it really helped to keep things in perspective.

Ms. Buckley: Like she kept saying this is going to be brief, and I feel like I keep adding and adding.

Researcher: I hated to keep everyone so long, but go ahead, Justin.

Mr. Fordham: But that was really that type of kind of I, I considered that actually professional development and that really helped me, especially at the end of the year kind of, I have all these thoughts in my head all the time, getting them out or realizing, I don't get them out so easily. There's probably a reason for that. That was really helpful. I feel like this was the type of thing we had where there was a coaching group thing like,

Ms. Martin: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Fordham: You know, like that type of thing and then you have this at the end. That would be really, really helpful for my profession...

Ms. Martin: That's a really good point because it's only new teachers that get that coaching and, and, and we need the coaching as veterans, you know. We actually need the coaching more than the new teachers because the new teachers are being coached to survive the first year. Once we get through the first five or six, it's a different type of survival for us.

Ms. Buckley: It is.

Mr. Fordham: Yeah.

Researcher: Yeah, it is definitely.

Ms. Buckley: I'm and I'm so glad that you shared that because I felt, and I didn't mean to interrupt while you were saying it, I was like, oh my gosh, like every time we met I'm like, I am the reason this went on for two hours, just keep talking and talking and I'm like did I even answer the question?

Ms. Martin: That's what we do as teachers.

Mr. Fordham: What was the question? Did I answer it?

Ms. Buckley: Oh, my goodness, like she has these specific questions. I need to stick to the question and answer it, but my mind is kind of, you know, like I will say one thing and it triggers another memory and it triggers something else and then.

Researcher: But did that help you in some way?

Ms. Buckley: It did.

Researcher: Okay.

Ms. Buckley: Like for our closing, like the feedback that you gave me in terms of how you viewed certain things⁵, like it, it caused me to reflect in a positive way, which I don't do that often. Like I'm super critical about what went wrong, what do I need to fix and Oh, I wish this kid would have done this. I wish this class went this way. Like I hardly ever take the time to say this is wonderful. Like my kids were happy about this, like for me to actually say to you during promotion when I went up there and said the last category of trophies is the debate category. Like I heard the kids go, 'Oh,' like in the audience, like, and I kind of just zipped past that moment, but it's like that was a highlight for them, and I don't take enough time to, you know, appreciate the good things I'm doing because I never want to come across as arrogant. Like I never.

Ms. Martin: That's good.

⁵ The feedback that Ms. Buckley referred to was the final interview when I presented each teacher with broad themes about their visions and practice as a form of member checking and asked for their input.

As the group discussion wrapped-up, the teachers together started to envision the role for a coach for veteran teachers, as Mr. Fordham and Ms. Martin had suggested. Ms. Martin stopped the group, “Yeah, I was going to take back what I just said about us having a coach. It wouldn't work” to which Ms. Buckley replied, “You’re right.” Ms. Martin continued, “It wouldn't be the same because any type of mentor teacher or coach within the school district would come with the box and tell us, you know, that they're coming from that point of view.” Ms. Buckley added, “You’re supposed to reach this.” Mr. Fordham confirmed their concerns, stating that he probably wouldn’t be willing to say more than three words, which was the end of that vision.

The teachers reported that having opportunities to reflect on their teaching in their own way where I listened “like a therapist” was a support. At that point in the discussion, on the very last day of the school year, they expanded their focus from the study itself to the larger experience within the BWP that they had been involved in for almost a year concluding that they felt supported to “be professional adults.” Ms. Martin stated, “And there was never a time in the whole year during the writing project that we felt we had to reform, you know, we were in, we had to go through all of these reforms.”

It is well-established that effective professional development positions teachers as the knowers and drivers of their professional learning. This includes engaging teachers as thinkers in intellectual and metacognitive work (Hawley & Valli, 2007; Lieberman & Mace, 2008; Schon, 1991) and reflecting critically on practice (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Findings of this study included insights into the specific supports teachers created for themselves for learning when they did not have access to professional learning opportunities.

Consistent with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) knowledge-in-practice paradigm, teachers' visions served as a means for examining their own conceptions of good teaching through reflection, though the application of this knowledge was limited due to their inability to publicly share these critical examinations with other teachers. Teachers could be seen creating new knowledge for their own future use as they engaged in reflecting on their visions with me during post-observation interviews. During interviews, teachers consistently engaged in a process of *re-envisioning*, whereby they came up with very specific ways that they would try something different to address an identified problem in their enactment. During the group interview on the last day of the school year, for example, teachers were still activating their re-envisioning modes with each other, offering specific visions for how they would make changes for the following school year to continue developing their inquiry focus work.

Findings of this study indicate that given the lack of colleagues in their schools to troubleshoot problems of practice, all three teachers reported turning inward and toward their own classrooms and engaging in reflective dialogue with me as a mode of professional learning; this supported their persistence and iterative refinement through the vision-to-practice process. Additionally, teachers viewed participating in reflective discussions about their process with me as not only a form of professional development but also as an affirming practice that contributed to their identities as "professional adults" that was lacking in their roles in their schools and district. This finding suggests that engaging in reflection on the vision-to-practice process through purposeful teacher-talk operated as an element of support for teacher inquiry that not only aided teachers' persistence but also played a role in developing a professional stance. This finding,

which warrants further research, aligns with the theory that teachers' visions may provide them with a professional standpoint from which to enact expanded professional identities aligned with their convictions (Duffy, 2002; McElhone et al., 2009).

Summary of Key Findings

Mr. Fordham, Ms. Buckley, and Ms. Martin did not always recognize barriers as they made accommodations during the school year that allowed them to make a path to continue working toward their envisioned goals. They engaged in practical decision-making and did not expect to retain that "pure vision" that they had accessed during the BWP Summer Institute. Instead, they viewed their visions as malleable as they worked around the many demands they encountered coming from outside of their classrooms. While they envisioned relevant professional learning opportunities, they found that the professional development offered by their schools and district were mismatched to their expectations. Accountability practices and a lack of collegiality also diverted attention from implementing their vision of writing instruction and helping students develop as writers. Some factors obscured their ability to develop a vision of good writing including their fuzzy understanding of the purpose of the District's literacy initiative and their own unexamined beliefs about students' writing challenges. School mandates also obscured their ability to enact their vision during periods of concentrated pressure; however, they found ways to persist with their plans for their inquiry through their drive for professional learning. Although the BWP Summer Institute supported teachers' conceptualization of their inquiry focus and inspired new practices, the teachers did not recognize many supports once they were back at school in their own specific classroom contexts. They were able to draw upon their own tolerance for the inquiry process and their students'

progress to keep perspective, as a source of motivation, and as a means for engaging in reflective practice. The teachers turned to the other members of the BWP as a support for their well-being and viewed their participation in this research study as a form of professional learning and development that contributed to their identities as professionals.

CHAPTER 8: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

In this dissertation, I investigated how three teachers participating in a professional learning program envisioned an inquiry focus for improving writing in their classroom and how they enacted their visions. A secondary interest was to uncover the main barriers and supports teachers encountered during the vision-to-practice process. In this final chapter, I look across cases in order to articulate broader findings. I begin by revisiting the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2 and offer a revised framework based on the findings of this study. In this discussion, I outline findings related to the role of the professional learning community and school literacy initiatives that provided the contextual frame of this study. I then synthesize the key findings related to teachers' vision-to-practice process across cases. In closing, I describe the limitations to this study and conclude with my implications for research and professional development.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

As described in Chapter 2, I developed a conceptual framework that guided the development of this study. This conceptual framework illustrated my assumptions about the individual teacher's experience of enacting an inquiry focus in their classroom and depicted the teacher's vision-to-practice process as embedded within broader institutional and social learning contexts. Within my original conceptual framework, I placed the District's reform-oriented literacy initiative based on the Common Core State Standards as the outermost contextual frame. Within that frame, I placed two overlapping fields representing the professional learning community in the field on the left and the school

context in the field on the right. The choice to make the frames overlapping represented my assumption that teachers would be motivated to participate in the professional learning community for the purpose of engaging in learning that would support changes to their teaching of writing in their classrooms. I further assumed that their learning focus within this community would be informed by local contexts including the implementation of the District's literacy initiative as a schoolwide effort. Figure 6 depicts my original conceptual framework of this vision-to-practice process as embedded within these contextual frames.

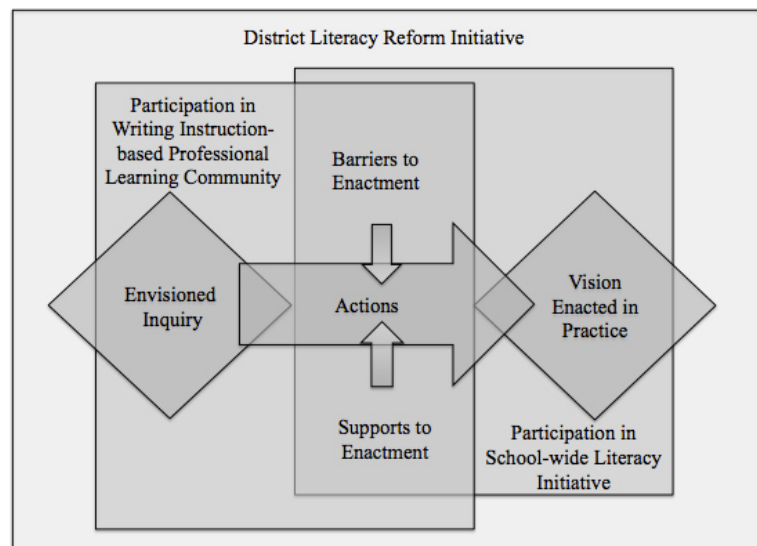


Figure 6: Original Conceptual Framework of Teachers' Vision-to-Practice Process

Within the overlapping fields of the professional learning community and school context in the original conceptual framework, I designated the space for teachers to enter a “zone of enactment” (Spillane, 1999) where they would have access to the supports of the professional learning community and the resources available within their school-wide literacy initiative to aid their efforts to improve their writing instruction. The overlapping

fields of my original conceptual framework suggested a dynamic relationship between these two contexts as a connected space where teachers would refine new knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Within these contexts, I held the assumption that teachers would engage in the development of new knowledge as they conceptualized their vision first during their engagement in professional development. Then, I theorized, they would be prepared to take action to move their vision into practice in their classrooms, subject to barriers and supports.

In contrast to my original assumptions, Figure 7 depicts my revised conceptual framework based on the findings of this study. Instead of being motivated by the District's literacy initiative, the findings of this study demonstrated that students' futures and teachers' own desires to be better teachers of writing were teachers' primary motivations to improve writing instruction and were the overriding factors for joining the professional learning program. To represent how their own learning and their students' learning were their priorities, I have moved the classroom space into the center of the diagram.

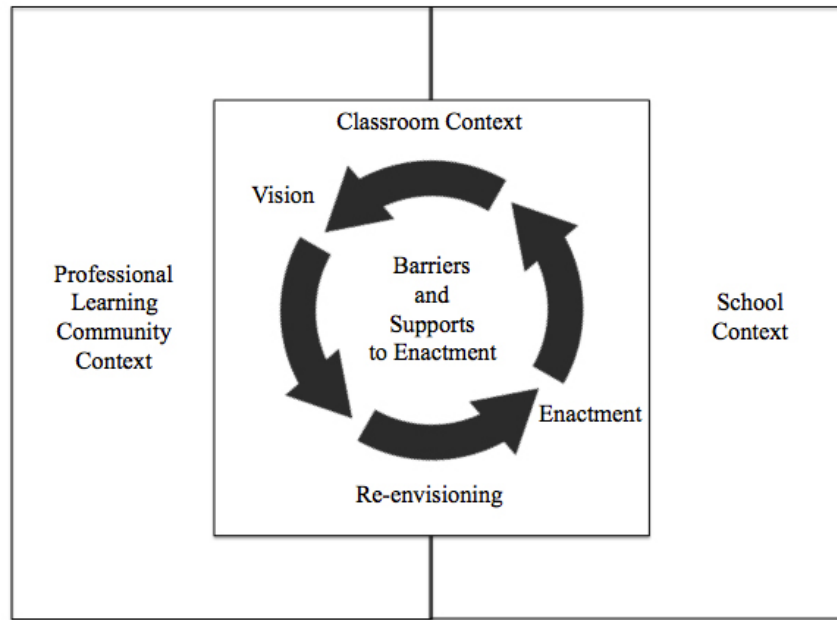


Figure 7: Revised Conceptual Framework of Teachers' Vision-to-Practice Process

Also represented in the revised conceptual framework is the finding that teachers positioned the District's literacy initiative as a barrier for teaching in ways that were consistent with their visions of good teaching. In the absence of a vision of "good writing" within the District's mandates, teachers relied on their own theoretical perspectives of writing development and their personal convictions to guide their inquiry focus and implementation in their classrooms. Therefore, the District's literacy initiative did not operate as a contextual framework for their inquiry work or their approach to improving writing. Based on these findings, the District's literacy initiative is removed from the outermost frame as it did not serve as a contextual framework.

Within the revised conceptual framework, the professional learning program is also no longer portrayed as a contextual frame for teachers' work within their broader school context. The BWP program provided the context for teachers' conceptualization

process where they were able to interrogate and articulate their “pure vision” and develop the rationale and resources to support their vision. The BWP cohort also provided broad support from outside of their school contexts during the school year; therefore, the professional learning program served as a contextual factor for conceptualizing teachers’ visions for inquiry and then a support for enactment from outside the school setting that nurtured the teacher-as-learner identity. However, the BWP community did not directly support the day-to-day enactment of new practices. In contrast to my assumptions, teachers viewed their inquiry work and membership in the professional learning community as a distinctly separate professional role from their role in their schools. Teachers viewed the BWP community as providing a unique learning environment outside of the school and district influence where they inhabited and protected a separate professional identity. Therefore, in the revised conceptual framework, I have separated the professional learning community context from the school context.

Findings from this study also suggested that while teachers did conceptualize their visions for inquiry within the professional learning context, they continued to refine and sharpen or even change their inquiry focus as they moved into their classroom context. Based on these findings, the zone of enactment is now depicted as a cycle within the classroom space where teachers learned about their students, engaged in research, tried new practices, measured their successes and shortcomings, made minor and major adjustments, and engaged in re-envisioning with me during this study. Within the revised conceptual framework, as represented in Figure 7, the vision-to-practice process is no longer depicted as a direct line from learning to classroom enactment. Findings of this

study demonstrated that the vision-to-practice process was iterative, recursive, and not linear within the classroom space.

The iterative loop that represents the vision-to-practice process is connected to the professional learning context with the classroom context through the vision thread. This move demonstrates the influence of professional learning in activating and nurturing teachers' visions. Social resources and comradery in the BWP operated in ways that supported teachers' visions for their professional growth and in the expansion of their visions for the role writing could play in their practice. In contrast, the school context intersects with the classroom context at the enactment thread to represent the authoritative influence of the school culture that limited teachers' agency in the classroom more than it supported teachers to reach for a vision. School accountability practices, mandated writing tasks, and lack of collegiality and professional learning all operated as barriers that influenced teachers' enactments.

Because teachers mostly did not see barriers and supports to their efforts, I present these factors as interacting and intertwining within practices and context, absorbed rather than defined, within the classroom space. Findings of the study indicated that when confronted with potential barriers, the teachers made new paths toward enactment as they pushed through, stretched, expanded, or put their visions on hold. Supports for this process were primarily found within their own classrooms and not from outside sources. Therefore, this study's findings suggest that teachers did not view barriers and supports separate from practice or context but viewed them as intertwined, interacting, and inevitable.

Finally, the re-envisioning thread of the iterative vision-to-practice process is positioned as a separate element within the classroom in order to represent the mostly individual work teachers undertook to innovate, adjust, assess, and reflect on their practices, as well as to measure their progress toward reaching their visions. Within this frame, teachers engaged in the complex “balancing act” between reaching for their visions, fulfilling their professional obligations, and meeting their students’ needs. In the next section, I present a cross-case analysis of teachers’ vision-to-practice processes to further illuminate these findings.

Cross-Case Analysis

Given the complex cluster of dimensions that made up each teacher’s vision, the challenges of enacting their envisioned changes, and the array of factors that served as barriers and supports to their efforts, a cross-case analysis provides an opportunity to illuminate the influences on teachers’ visions, how teachers’ decisions revealed priorities and tensions, and how barriers and supports interacted with teachers’ enactments. First, I describe how teachers’ theoretical perspectives of writing development influenced their visions. Second, I discuss how teachers’ vision orientations guided their enactments. Then, I describe the tensions, gaps, and coherence between teachers’ visions and enactments. Finally, I examine the interaction of barriers and supports that complicated teachers’ visions for taking a professional stance in their schools and district.

Finding 1: Teachers’ Theoretical Perspectives of Writing Influence Beliefs and Vision for Role

As has been well-documented, teachers bring their own set of complicated values, beliefs and theories to their teaching which influence their practice (Blake, 2002;

Kennedy, 1999; 2005). Findings of this study indicated that teacher's held very specific and complex theoretical perspectives of writing development which were reflected in their beliefs about students' writing challenges and shaped their visions for their roles in helping students to improve as writers. As has been described in each teacher's case chapter, the teachers in this study exhibited marked differences in terms of how they approached their inquiry in their classroom which reflected different theoretical perspectives on how writing development occurs. This was the case with each teacher even though none of them had any specialized training in writing pedagogy outside of their involvement with the BWP program. These perspectives informed their understanding of students' writing challenges and guided their vision for their inquiry approach as well as their enactments of specific practices in their roles as teachers of writing. Mr. Fordham had a technical perspective; Ms. Buckley, a social action perspective, and Ms. Martin, a cognitive perspective of writing development. These perspectives, which were evident in their beliefs, intentions, and practices during the time of this study, are presented in Table 9 and described below.

Table 9

Teachers' Perspective, Roles, Beliefs, Strategies, and Tools Used

Teacher	Theoretical Perspective of writing development	Role	Beliefs about Students' Challenges	Beliefs About How Students Improve	Strategies/ Tools Used
Mr. Fordham	Technical Perspective	Task Monitor	- ideas are in their heads "like a washing machine" - lack mental grit	- prescriptive structure - repeated tasks - scaffolding independence	- structured organizers - directive feedback - detailed rubrics

			- overwhelmed by information		
Ms. Buckley	Social Action Perspective	Responsive Facilitator	- “write the way they speak” - lack basic writing skills - lazy due to technology	- freedom to express themselves - peer accountability - connect to interests and strengths - correct errors	- self- monitoring tasks - respond to student questions - collaborative tools - edit student errors
Ms. Martin	Cognitive Perspective	Reader/ Monitor	- can’t get started - copy each other’s ideas - ideas are unformed - fear being wrong	- activating thinking - being sensitive - accountability - following steps in the writing process	-ask clarifying questions -make stylistic suggestions - one-on-one monitoring - share during the writing process

The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of how teachers’ theoretical perspectives of writing informed their vision-to-practice process. To varying degrees, findings suggest that teachers’ beliefs about students’ challenges and what students needed to improve were consistent with their standpoints and informed their visions for enacting their inquiry in their classrooms. In turn, the process of assimilating new practices within their existing theoretical perspective informed the roles, tools, and strategies that the teachers selected and utilized.

Mr. Fordham's technical perspective guided how he positioned himself as a gatekeeper and monitor of tasks in the classroom and how he conceptualized argument writing as a series of structural elements. Mr. Fordham created repetitive tasks for students to learn the process needed to create a specific product, the five-paragraph essay, in the form of a written text. His beliefs about how students' ideas were jumbled in their heads and how they needed to develop psychological processes such as "grit" to improve as writers were consistent with this perspective (Beach et al., 2015). His assessment of students' writing abilities using a detailed rubric which focused on structure over other writing goals (such as making an effective argument) was a new tool he employed to help students improve as writers that was informed by this technical view of writing development.

Ms. Buckley also focused on argumentation; however, her selection of debate-style activities demonstrated a different perspective from Mr. Fordham's. Her perspective that students learned to be better writers through navigating social practices such as adopting alternative viewpoints demonstrated her social action perspective (Beach et al., 2015). Of the three teachers, Ms. Buckley's beliefs about students' writing challenges were the least consistent with her perspective. In particular, her belief that students were lazy due to technology was informed by her beliefs about the "Google It" generation. These unexamined beliefs about students' challenges conflicted with her new beliefs about how students could improve through opportunities to connect to their strengths and interests which created tension when she evaluated students' progress through written products. Because she believed students would improve through social collaboration, she added new practices of public writing which also demonstrate a social action view that

writing development occurs through building relationships to readers and sharing meaning (Beach et al., 2015).

In Ms. Martin's cognitive perspective of writing development, writing was prioritized as a mental process of making thinking visible (MacArthur & Graham, 2016). Ms. Martin's belief that students had a hard time getting started because they had unformed ideas and feared being wrong reflected her focus on writing as a cognitive process. Although Mr. Fordham also believed students struggled to express their ideas, the differences between their beliefs about how teachers could help students improve reflected their different perspectives. While Mr. Fordham believed students needed help getting their ideas into an organized form, like folding clothes and putting them into the closet, Ms. Martin believed that students would improve through considering new ideas and learning decision-making skills such as techniques to "color" their descriptions. In her role, Ms. Martin used "pacing" to talk students through brainstorming and idea generation which are practices consistent with a cognitive perspective. In her classroom, students had "thinking time" to produce texts for later retrieval, such as the journal entries they wrote to capture ideas for writing their Snapshot Memoirs.

Summary of Key Finding 1

This finding that teachers held complex perspectives of writing development challenges a common assumption implicit in reform-oriented initiatives, such as the one in this district, that position teachers as technicians who are trained to transmit knowledge and curriculum to students without providing them with a theoretical basis (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). This was how the teachers described the implementation of the District's literacy initiative which they critiqued for taking a "one size fits all" approach.

Without a conceptual understanding of the initiative, teachers could not latch onto the goals of the literacy initiative which resulted in a lack of buy-in. Teachers reported being mandated to implement a series of tasks, including using a prescribed thesis statement, which conflicted with their specific theoretical perspectives and beliefs about how students improve as writers. Without a common schoolwide vision, teachers relied on their own theoretical perspectives and made their own decisions about how to approach writing instruction improvement based on these perspectives. I argue that they continued working toward their own visions around the literacy initiative rather than working within its purposes because teachers were not provided with a theoretical framework for how it would help them teach writing or help their students improve as writers.

The findings of this study also contribute to our understanding of how new information is assimilated within pre-existing perspectives. I contend that teachers' theoretical perspectives served as a significant source of "guiding images that act as a filter for new information" (Blake, 2002). The vast differences in teachers' choices and approaches to their inquiry focus demonstrate how teachers learned and utilized the "content" of the BWP program through their own unique perspectives as they filtered new learning through their theoretical lens (Blake, 2002; Zimmerman, 2017). This finding also supports the contention that teachers' own theories and beliefs are complex and resilient. Although unique, teachers' beliefs about students' writing challenges were primarily expressed as broad deficits, such as their beliefs that students were unable to organize their thinking, that they were lazy due to technology, and that they were unable to form their own ideas, which remained unexamined during the time of this study even in the face of disconfirming evidence. However, teachers' beliefs about what they could

do to help students improve as writers demonstrated that they were expanding their visions for their roles as teachers of writing in practical ways to accommodate new beliefs about writing development that they had conceptualized during the BWP program. Teachers modified their roles to be more facilitative, sensitive, and intentional to foster a process approach, emphasizing new opportunities for collaboration, idea generation, and feedback during the writing process.

Finding 2: Orientations of Teachers' Visions Guide Alignment and Enactment

Throughout this study, I drew upon Hammerness' (2001) vision dimensions, which included teachers' visions for their role, their students' roles, the curriculum, and 21st Century learning. I used these dimensions to inform data collection and as an analytical lens for understanding how these complex facets of teachers' ideals interacted with their inquiry focus for teaching writing. Hammerness (2001), as well as other researchers who followed, demonstrated that these dimensions proved useful for understanding the relationship between prospective teachers' visions and how satisfied they were with their teaching. Findings of this study support the utility of examining practicing teachers' visions through these dimensions of teaching.

In the following analysis, I argue that each teacher had a specific vision orientation that guided their alignment of these dimensions. Through analysis using Hammerness' (2001) vision dimensions, I determined an orientation pattern for each teacher's "reach" for their inquiry focus which was further illustrated by a vision metaphor that the teachers' invoked to describe their efforts within their teaching context. As this study, like Hammerness' (2001) study, was informed by a sociocultural perspective, another organizing element of this analysis was each teacher's specific

context, which Hammerness (2001) described as “critically important to [teachers] ability to carry out their visions” (p. 146). Therefore, how teachers felt supported within their schools is addressed. Finally, the alignment of teachers’ inquiry approach to outside contexts including reform-oriented initiatives was another contextual factor of their vision orientation. As has been presented in each teacher’s case chapter, Mr. Fordham is described as vision-forward; Ms. Buckley as practice-forward; and Ms. Martin is described as immediate-concerns forward. Teachers’ vision metaphors, orientations, school contexts, and alignment to outside reform initiatives are presented in Table 10 and described below.

Table 10

Teachers’ Vision Metaphor, Vision Orientation, Support, and Alignment to Initiatives

Teacher	Vision Metaphor	Vision Orientation	Support in school context	Alignment of vision to reform-orientated initiatives
Mr. Fordham	At the tip of the spear	Vision-forward	Supportive/neutral and unsupportive	Aligned to CCSS; attempted alignment to MGPSS literacy initiative
Ms. Buckley	Guard of the classroom zone	Practice-forward	Neutral	Aligned to schoolwide writing goals for Social Studies and (accidentally) District Capstone Project goals
Ms. Martin	Swimming in the middle of the water	Immediate-concerns forward	Supportive	Aligned to schoolwide improvement

Teachers' visions of a "reach" for using writing in their classrooms were specifically activated during the BWP Institute through writing as a mode of learning at multiple points during the year. Analysis of each teachers' vision orientations demonstrated that they were highly personal, varied, and represented more than simply their philosophies about teaching.

Mr. Fordham described himself as "at the tip of the spear" which represented his vision-forward stance within a school environment that was "resting on its laurels" with teachers who were protective of the status quo. Mr. Fordham was alone in his department striving for his broad yet actionable vision for redesigning his course to focus on argumentative writing. Without guidance or true support, Mr. Fordham relied on his own broad vision of students being prepared for the changing economic forces in the 21st Century to select his inquiry focus area and engage in his own learning process through immersion in the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts documents. Because of his vision-forward orientation, Mr. Fordham was not daunted by the distance between his current practice and his vision, which required a significant shift in roles, practices, and curricular emphasis. Mr. Fordham's vision was actionable and aligned across vision facets through the benchmarks that he was striving to attain. These included his transition from gatekeeping toward his ultimate vision of being a salon host. Mr. Fordham's vision-forward stance could be seen in his development of the How We Get to Higher Order Thinking Skills pyramid which built toward students using their literacy

skills in their future college and career endeavors. Mr. Fordham was uncompromising yet patient when it came to his vision. He stated that he expected it would take a few years for him to achieve his ultimate vision for truly fostering synthesis skills; however, because of his vision-forward orientation, he viewed striving for this distant vision as a moral imperative that was necessary and attainable.

Ms. Buckley described herself as a protector of her students and someone who guarded “her zone.” I contend that Ms. Buckley was more focused on her students’ needs and on implementation of her best practices within her classroom “zone” than she was on reaching for a specific vision; however, her vision elements were very clearly aligned across the vision dimensions. Her vision became more of a driver during the year as she fine-tuned her approach and achieved success with the specific eighth-grade students in her classes whom she described as “opinionated” but not interested in writing their ideas down. The selection of vetted resources for incorporating debate-style activities around current events was also evident of her practice-forward orientation. As Ms. Buckley learned more about her students’ needs, she revisited her vision and expanded her inquiry focus to incorporate additional resources and metacognitive practices, in service to her approach. A strategist and planner, Ms. Buckley intentionally selected an inquiry area that she felt was doable and chose component pieces that were well-aligned with her own passions and strengths as well as within schoolwide improvement goals of her Social Studies department. In this way, her vision was actionable and relevant to her teaching responsibilities. Ms. Buckley, like Mr. Fordham, experienced little support in her school; in particular, she found the lack of coordination interfered with her ability to rise above the day-to-day demands to keep her vision in focus. She missed some key highlights and

successes as a result. Because of her practice-forward orientation, Ms. Buckley aligned elements of her vision with the ultimate goal of empowering students to take initiative and ownership of learning which one of her administrators told her was “so refreshing.”

Ms. Martin appeared to be the least focused on her vision of the three teachers. Primarily, Ms. Martin’s vision remained in the background to her *immediate concerns*, as Kennedy (1998) has described the responses teachers have to situations that arise in their classroom. For Ms. Martin, these concerns included addressing pressing student needs and classroom management, which had a tendency to prevail over Ms. Martin’s espoused ideals. Because she was more likely to respond to what was on her mind or occurring in her classroom in the moment, I described her as “immediate-concerns forward.” Ms. Martin had many guiding passions, strong feelings, and beliefs about writing, and consistently invoked the terms “voice” and “authenticity” to describe what she wanted for her students during interviews. For example, she took a stance against the PARRC-style writing focus of the curriculum guide by engaging students in more impromptu journal writing because of her strong convictions. Upon closer examination through observations, there were elements of her vision for student voice that were evident in Ms. Martin’s goals and practices; however, Ms. Martin often discredited her role in that outcome. For example, when her classes engaged in sharing their significant moment as a spontaneous class forum and outpouring of genuine feeling, Ms. Martin did not attribute that event to an enactment of her vision for authenticity but instead to her students wanting to run the classroom. Ms. Martin struggled to feel successful due to her immediate-concerns orientation which caused her to focus on the day-to-day business of the classroom. She described being unable to access her vision during those times, which she referred to as

like trying to see while “swimming in the middle of the water.” I argue that the BWP helped to activate a “reach” for Ms. Martin that she could see in glimmers and that became more actionable toward the end of the year as she got above “the water” through engaging in reflective dialogue with me. Over time, Ms. Martin was able to rise above her immediate concerns to see how she was helping her students engage in authentic experiences for expressing themselves. Ms. Martin used the vision-practice-re-envisioning process as a mode for identifying practical steps she could take in the future to achieve her vision for activating students’ voices.

Summary of Key Finding 2

While much of the literature on teacher vision has focused on the development of vision in pre-service teacher education, this study filled a gap in the literature on the role of vision in experienced teachers’ process for improving their teaching practice. Findings of this study provide insights into how teachers’ vision orientations influenced how they enacted their inquiry focus in their classrooms. These different orientations played a key role in each teachers’ decision-making process and guided how they aligned their inquiry focus with other facets of their vision. The findings of this study indicated that teachers’ vision orientations acted as a guide for how they approached improving their teaching practice. While having a vision-forward stance resulted in a high tolerance for change over time, a practice-forward stance resulted in refinement of vision specific to students’ needs. An immediate-concerns orientation resulted in practice-based decisions that were informed by a “pure vision” but responsive in the moment. While only one of the teachers relied on their vision as the primary driver for their decision-making, all three teachers used their visions as a motivator to reach for new learning and as a tool for

reflecting upon their progress toward their inquiry focus. This finding builds on the literature on pre-service and early career teachers' visions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Hammerness, 2001, 2006; Kennedy, 2006).

Hammerness (2001) argued that teachers' visions could be characterized and understood in terms of clarity, distance, and context which she argued were predictive factors that influenced the degree to which teachers were satisfied with their work. The findings of this study challenge that characterization. First, the teachers in this study's vision profiles did not match up with the most common profiles from Hammerness's (2001) study, which suggests that more nuanced factors influenced how the experienced teachers in this study assessed their satisfaction with their teaching contexts. In particular, the two teachers in this study who did not have vision-forward profiles were more tolerant of contextual factors that were outside of their control, such as school mandates, and referenced "survival mode" and having "flexible" visions as a strategy for protecting their visions from outside influences. The findings of this study support that these teachers had already accepted these limitations and actively worked around them to keep striving for their visions. Their satisfaction with their teaching was not as directly influenced by contextual factors as the teachers in Hammerness's (2001) study.

Secondly, the teachers in this study's visions were more complex than Hammerness's (2001) vision descriptors of focus, range, and distance imply. In particular, Hammerness's (2001) categorization of vision focus as either "clear" or "blurry" depicts vision as a normative concept. The concept of vision clarity does not capture the work teachers undertook to use their vision to conceptualize, modify, revise, and measure their practice as they worked toward their inquiry focus. Findings of this

study support that teachers' visions were not static but became more concrete, personal, and actionable as teachers refined their ideas, engaged in inquiry in their classrooms and schools, developed their teacher inquiry workshop, and participated in reflective dialogue with me during this study. Therefore, each teacher's vision developed and evolved through their own unique process of professional learning and development.

Finally, Hammerness' (2001) vision characteristics of focus and range suggest that teachers have a one-dimensional vision while the teachers in this study held two multi-dimensional visions simultaneously. The first was a more concrete vision for improving their teaching practice that had been enhanced through their work on their inquiry focus. This vision was embedded within the facets of their vision of good teaching. The second focal point was more expansive for enacting a professional stance within a broader educational context, including their visions of themselves as teacher-learners, teacher-knowers, and teacher-leaders in their schools. This expanding vision reflected their individual desires for being treated as professionals. These two focal points suggest that practicing teachers' visions may be more complex than those of the mostly pre-service and early career teachers presented in the literature who held more ideal and simple visions that were focused on their teaching.

Finding 3: Teachers' Priorities Reveal Gaps, Bridges, and Coherence Between Vision and Enactments

Across cases, there emerged common themes that revealed both tensions as well as points of coherence between teachers' *espoused theories*, what they professed to practice as related to their inquiry focus in the form of intentions, and their *theories in action*, or what they showed in practice, as demonstrated through their enactments during

observations (Schon, 1983). These themes were apparent through an analysis of teachers' stated intentions and observed actions in the classroom. Inconsistencies between intentions and actions served to point to gaps between visions and practice which were informed by teachers' vision orientations and revealed their priorities. Teachers' reflections during post-observation interviews revealed differing levels of self-awareness and efforts to bridge the gap between vision and practice.

Unbalancing and rebalancing the content. How teachers positioned the content relevant to making room for their inquiry focus area revealed tensions in the balancing act. While teachers could see imbalances, they were not always able to see what actions they might take to rebalance or bridge the gap between vision and practice. Although the three teachers all felt that they had flexibility within their curriculum sanctioned by their principals, they also made decisions that were driven by a felt need to “cover” the content which were guided by the curriculum guide or their textbooks.

With his vision-forward stance, Mr. Fordham had the most difficulty with achieving balance. When he needed to push forward with his plan, he always tipped the balance away from content in order to stay the course toward his distant vision. As a teacher who was passionate about history and felt a strong sense of responsibility for teaching students Nationalism through history, this decision created tension for him. As he came up against opportunities for rebalancing during the year, gaps formed between his intention and actions that revealed resilient teaching practices. During class discussions, for example, Mr. Fordham asked questions that led to mostly fact-checking rather than engaging students in higher-level questions toward synthesis. When reflecting on his perceptions of those interactions, Mr. Fordham recognized the gap between his

vision and current practice and specifically pointed at his role in giving “direct instruction;” however disappointed he was with the results, he did not have clarity about what this realization suggested to bridge that gap.

Consistent with her practice-forward orientation, Ms. Buckley added her inquiry focus area as an “extra” to the practices and projects that she had already developed and which represented her tried and true principles of practice. Adding on debates during the year took time away from content delivery which was an accepted tradeoff for her with the exception of the Teach-for-a-Day project. Because of her practice and classroom-focused orientation, Ms. Buckley was more focused on her goals for bringing the class together and giving students leadership roles than she was in controlling the delivery of the content, even content that was important to her vision for historical themes of justice. Pushing forward with the Teach-for-a-Day Project along with the Capstone Project resulted in compounding of required and overlapping projects which caused strain on her students. Ms. Buckley recognized the problem with the outcome but did not see the emphasis on the Teach-for-a-Day projects as resulting in a tradeoff. In general, her focus on the development of learning dispositions remained out of balance with her content.

For Ms. Martin, her inquiry focus area actually brought some balance back to what she viewed as an over emphasis on research-based writing stressed in her curriculum that mirrored standardized testing tasks. Ms. Martin often positioned herself as in opposition to the curriculum because of this imbalance. With Ms. Martin’s broader inquiry focus on helping students to bring forth their authentic voices, she found her way to bringing back journal writing and impromptu writing to the forefront of her practice, which Ms. Martin stated she had not done in a long time and was only able to do in the

fourth quarter because testing season was over. This process also brought awareness for how this type of writing could benefit her broader vision for authenticity and voice. Ms. Martin regained some balance as her inquiry focus became more actionable and she gained confidence in her decisions, which expanded her vision for how she might utilize her inquiry to complement rather than to subvert the curriculum. Enacting her inquiry focus provided some clarity for how she might rebalance expressive and prescriptive forms of writing going forward.

Trying to see critical thinking. The teachers in this study had wide ranging conceptions of what they viewed as necessary skills and learning dispositions for students to develop for their participation in society and for their futures. Although it was challenging for them to teach, all three teachers included critical thinking skills as a core element of their inquiry focus. In the absence of a systemic vision for teaching critical thinking skills, teachers turned to their own specific visions of their students as critical thinkers, relying on their broad knowledge of 21st Century goals of readiness for college and career.⁶ Mr. Fordham wanted to see students engaging in synthesis of sources in order to put forward an argument. Ms. Buckley wanted to see students critically evaluating information so that they could substantiate their own opinions with evidence and strong reasoning. Ms. Martin was broadly interested in students activating their own thinking independently and then using discussion as a method for considering other ideas and “enhancing” that thinking for expression, a form of synthesis.

⁶ In the common educational language related to preparing students for the 21st Century, 21st Century literacy skills refer to critical-thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills that enable students to “read, write, speak, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas” for promoting college and career readiness (“English Language Arts Standards”).

Although all three teachers created opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking, they had a difficult time “seeing” evidence of critical thinking in students’ written products. Mr. Fordham concluded that he could see evidence that students had mastered the SOAPSTone close reading strategy and Cornell note-taking, but he was less convinced that his students had engaged in deep synthesis from assessing their written essays. When Ms. Buckley examined students’ responses to the Constitutional Amendments activity, she mostly did not see the depth of reasoning that she was looking for. Likewise, when she evaluated the Capstone Projects at the end of the year, she remarked that evidence of reasoning was missing from students’ responses. Ms. Martin also could not see the critical thinking she wanted to see from discussion in students’ writing; she called it, “untraceable.”

When there was clear evidence of students’ critical thinking skills, the teachers missed it because they were looking at something else. Mr. Fordham could not see evidence of students’ critical thinking skills in the video essay until he was able to evaluate their synthesis in making the comparison to the final at the end of the year when he was no longer focused on students’ struggle with technology. Ms. Buckley missed the critical thinking skills evident in students’ Capstone Projects because she was distracted by structural flaws and grammatical errors. When she transitioned from impromptu to formal writing, Ms. Martin missed the opportunity to have students reflect on how their thinking had changed related to speaking up or staying silent through their study of “The Diary of Anne Frank,” which would have provided clear evidence of synthesis of their readings and their many discussions.

During post-observation interviews, teachers alluded to this gap between their vision and practice for developing students as critical thinkers but accommodated or justified what was lacking rather than taking specific action to create a bridge.

Connecting vision facets through productive struggle. All three teachers persisted through a *productive struggle* that brought coherence to their teaching and resulted in learning. Within these enactments, teachers' hopes for students' futures and participation in 21st Century society, not abstractions of critical thinking skills, independence, or college and career readiness, served as a mediating factor and in some cases, generated a bi-directional influence between teacher and students that expanded their classroom community.

Mr. Fordham, who became quite comfortable in his six-step cycle during the year, stepped out of that comfort zone with his video essay assignment to renew his own love of history and country and to learn from his students what they thought it meant to be an American. In this assignment, Mr. Fordham engaged students in a form of personal discovery through composing that he himself had valued in his own writing during the BWP Institute. This assignment brought his students' lived experiences into conversation with historical themes and made way for ethos, pathos, and logos to co-exist and potentially expand Mr. Fordham's vision for other ways to make an effective argument. The first attempt was challenging for Mr. Fordham and his students; however, the products revealed precisely what Mr. Fordham wanted for his students to consider about their futures and as a vehicle for students to celebrate and share their unique heritages and backgrounds. Even students' technology issues provided an opportunity for Mr. Fordham that challenged his own assumptions about students' technology skills. He redesigned the

assignment for the end of the year to better meet students where they were and re-envisioned ways that he could gauge students' readiness in the future. He felt that this assignment was a "turning point" in student learning. It also brought some balance to students' roles in his classroom as knowers and provided Mr. Fordham an opportunity to see writing as a mode for creating and building community. Students proudly shared their products to their families at a special event that Mr. Fordham created for that purpose. Through this productive struggle, Mr. Fordham moved toward his distant vision of "sailing together" with his students.

Ms. Buckley gradually built up to the Arming Teachers debate which brought together facets of her vision for students taking initiative and ownership of their learning with her vision for connecting her own curriculum to real-world issues through using debate strategies. All of these threads were brought together in service of her own specific focus on developing students' dispositions for citizenship and their confidence to own their own opinions. It was clear that this assignment provided students with a meaningful challenge and a platform for them to engage collaboratively in ways that expanded their own interest in learning beyond the requirements of the assignment toward authenticity. Although Ms. Buckley tended to guard her "zone," her students pushed the boundaries of their classroom into the school community to conduct interviews with teachers and staff members in the building that brought diverse perspectives into the classroom space. Ms. Buckley's vision for engaging students in topics related to justice was a connecting thread to their engagement with this as real world issue that then spilled over to taking a stance on school related, relevant issues of the student walk-out and the loss of the iPads by the other eighth-grade students. When

students became so impassioned over the outcome of the debate, there was a bi-directional influence as Ms. Buckley used that information to identify another way for students to examine and channel their passion in service of her larger goals for students' development of character and reciprocity. This, in effect, expanded her vision. By introducing metacognitive reflection, Ms. Buckley brought in another form of writing as a mode of learning for students to think about their own thinking, assess their own contributions to the good of the group as well as consider their team's performance. Through their reflections, she saw student growth in ways that helped her measure her own progress toward achieving her vision.

Ms. Martin's vision grew more actionable during the year with the help of her students who connected her vision for honing students' voices to their own visions for their classroom as a community that helped to clarify for Ms. Martin what "authenticity" meant for her students. Through journaling about significant moments and whether to speak up or stay silent, some of her students found a healing process through writing that Ms. Martin had experienced during the BWP program in the summer. She was ultimately able to lead students to produce a piece of formal writing, the snapshot memoir, that demonstrated to her how informal writing, formal writing, and writing-to-learn could work in service of each other. In thinking about the process, she said, "Why do I have to go through chaos to get beauty?" In particular, she gained clarity about how she had projected the audience of the District as the "reader" on student work and how she would represent the concept of audience to students differently in the future. She wanted students to know that to write authentically, they could write to please themselves or for their own special audience.

Ms. Martin was able to take a stance on informal writing and planned to use reflective writing with every writing assignment the following year, even though it was not in the curriculum guide, so that students could “define themselves as writers and not me defin[ing] them as a writer.” In this way, Ms. Martin took a stand and moved toward her vision of “honing-in” on students’ voices. This finding is consistent with the vision literature that suggests that vision may inspire independent thinking and provide teachers with a standpoint to “speak back” to institutional directives (Duffy, 2002; Hammerness, 2003; 2006; Vaughn & Faircloth, 2011; 2013).

Summary of Key Finding 3

Analysis of teacher’s *lines of thinking* (Kennedy, 2005) across vision, intentions, actions, and perceived outcomes demonstrated examples of tensions, gaps, cohesion, and expansion between teachers’ visions and their enactment of practices in their classrooms. Findings of this study suggest that introducing a new focus through an area of inquiry created a tension between content and the development of 21st Century skills and dispositions that disrupted the balance in teachers’ practices. While this struggle to achieve balance is well-established in the literature (Blake, 2002; Hammerness; 2006; Hawthorne, 1992; Kennedy, 2005;), the specific findings of this study contribute to our understanding of how gaps between teachers visions and enactments pointed to learning opportunities that teachers addressed and also that they accommodated.

The findings of this study align and build on the literature on vision that has demonstrated how the distance between teachers’ visions and actions may reveal "blind spots" to specific aspects of teaching such as being culturally responsive (Hammerness, 2006; Turner, 2007) and how the contradictions within teachers’ visions may create

"knots in thinking" when teachers are presented with an instructional dilemma (Kennedy, 2006; Zimmerman, 2017). Zimmerman's (2017) study suggests that teachers make accommodations for events in the classroom that do not consistently align with their visions and make sense of those gap in terms of a partial fit or "good enough" match with their intentions (Zimmerman, 2017). All three teachers made accommodations to their expectations to account for not seeing critical thinking. For example, at times, they changed their goals for the learning activity between pre-observation and post-observation interviews by identifying a proxy that was easier for them to attain or assess. When teachers made accommodations for gaps between their visions and enactments, their accommodations suggested a lack of pedagogical knowledge to fill the gap. Findings of this study also contribute to our understanding of how teachers confront gaps between vision and practice. When teachers examined their own assumptions or incorporated feedback from students, they were more likely to take action to address the gap.

According to the literature, because teaching is a complex decision-making process, visions may provide guidance that come from a place of personal and moral commitment to kids and to teaching (Duffy, 2002; Hammerness, 2003; 2006; Vaughn & Faircloth, 2013). The findings of this study align and contribute to this literature. Within the three prime examples of coherence between vision and enactment, teachers' personal convictions moved teachers to "reach" and engage in the productive struggle of professional growth that moved them toward their more challenging visions. These points of coherence involved risk taking and shifting ownership of learning toward students as knowers. Further research is needed to investigate the suggestion of a bi-directional

synergy between teacher and students' visions that appeared to bring the class together as a community.

Finding 4: Barriers and Supports Interact to Complicate Teachers' Visions for Taking a Professional Stance

This study was conceived out of my strong belief that teachers' visions and voices should be at the center of conversations about reform in schools and districts. My overriding interest as a teacher, researcher, and professional development leader in conducting this study was to listen and to give voice to teachers' every day experiences of their hopes, dreams, fears and aspirations for themselves, their students, and for the practice of teaching. During the course of this study as teachers shared their visions with me, it became clear that they held a larger vision for their roles as experienced teachers aspiring to connect their learning in the BWP to their practice in their schools that extended beyond their own experiences of implementing their inquiry focus in their classroom as a "project," even as that work had taken on meaning for them within their classroom teaching. This vision came forward in their reported efforts to enact what I came to describe as a professional stance within an expanding vision of themselves as teacher professionals. In this section, I examine how the intersections of supports and barriers described in Chapter 7 revealed themes related to teachers' attempts to enact their visions as teacher-learners, teacher-knowers, and teacher-leaders.

Barriers and supports to enacting a stance as teacher-learner. The teachers in this study saw themselves as works-in-progress. They came to the BWP with a vision for their own professional learning and growth that developed through their conceptualization process in the summer where they engaged in writing as a form of

discovery. They found support and encouragement from their coaching groups of like-minded teachers who were invested in learning and developing their inquiry. This was apparent in the description of the caring feedback that Ms. Martin described receiving from Ms. Buckley and Mr. Fordham on her personal writing piece that helped heal her as a writer. Once the school year began, teachers did not have this same supportive network in their schools and experienced a stifling effect of professional isolation. Even though they still had the BWP “support” during the year, they were unable to make tangible use of this “outside” comradery within the specific context of their own teaching in their classrooms. Without a common teaching context, the pieces were not in place to create a true *community of practice* where members engage in the work of building a *shared* practice and cultivate their collective competence through their interactions (Wenger, 1998). Without this community, the teachers used their involvement in this research study as a substitute for other professional learning opportunities that they had envisioned but did not have access to in their schools. By engaging in reflective dialogue within their school context, they were able to share their practice with me in a way that allowed them to enact their visions of themselves as teacher-learners.

Barriers and supports to enacting a stance as teacher-knower. The teachers in this study received broad support from their principals who left them alone. However, they felt unmoored at times without professional colleagues and struggled to find their role within their schools as “knowers.” They received many messages from within their schools that called into question their own knowledge authority, and they deferred to outside knowledge sources such as the curriculum, the textbook, and the Common Core State Standards. They reported feelings of powerlessness over the implementation of the

literacy initiative within their own classrooms as when Ms. Buckley referred to November as “Hostile Takeover Month.” They also felt that the data-driven culture of their schools positioned knowledge derived from test scores over teacher knowledge derived from teacher intuition or other teacher-made assessments. This left them feeling that they did not know their students as well as they had in the past. Through their inquiry work, however, teachers reclaimed some of that ground. They tapped into new sources of knowledge outside of the curriculum and textbooks for ideas through inquiry, engaging in writing as discovery, and employing their own research methods and theories. In particular, the teachers positioned the knowledge that they made through their inquiry into their own practice and the development of their TIW as distinct from that of being “reformed.”

Barriers and supports to enacting a stance as teacher-leader. The BWP provided support for teachers to see themselves as agents of their own professional trajectory. Through the NWP mission of teachers-teaching-teachers, the BWP leaders designed the program with the aim of empowering teachers as leaders of change efforts within their schools. Through their process of developing an inquiry and subsequent workshop they developed a new vision for their own teacher leadership. Once in their schools, a lack of professional learning opportunities and lack of collegiality created barriers to their efforts to share their knowledge developed from their inquiry with other teachers except for Ms. Martin, whose inquiry was directed and coopted by her principal for other purposes. Although the vision was for teachers to take on roles of teacher leadership from the ground-up, such as delivering their TIW to a teacher audience within their schools, there was no coordination or support at the organizational level for teachers

to enact their roles as leaders. As a consequence of these failures, teachers felt that their sense of professional identity that was part of that “pure vision” did not transfer from the BWP into their school setting.

Limitations

While this study has the potential to make a contribution to our understanding of teacher vision and enactment, it has several limitations. As a multi-case study with three participants, this study’s findings are not generalizable to all practicing teachers attempting to implement an inquiry into their teaching practice. Teachers’ practices are highly individual and contextual, as are their visions for improving practice. However, the goals of case study research are not generalizability but instead particularity (Yin, 2014). As such, I was looking to better understand the particular experiences of teachers who engaged in a writing instruction focused professional learning experience and how they envisioned and enacted an inquiry into their teaching. By focusing on this particular context, it was my hope that the findings would be useful at the local level by the professional learning community. While these case study findings may not be generalizable to other populations, they may be generalizable to theoretical propositions (Yin, 2014). It is my hope to contribute to the theoretical understanding of the role of practicing teachers’ visions within professional learning communities and within reform-oriented contexts for what can be learned from these theoretical findings.

Another limitation of this study stems from my researcher stance. Although I assumed the role of an informed observer in teachers’ classrooms and adopted a stance of someone who was there to learn from teachers as the experts of their own classroom domain, it is possible that teachers may intentionally or unintentionally have altered their

teaching practice because of my presence or my role. To address this concern, I observed teachers on multiple occasions at their invitation to develop their comfort level. I stated my interest in learning from them rather than evaluating them by asking them to identify points in the lesson that they wanted to discuss. I also relied on multiple data sources for conclusions rather than relying solely on observations to address this limitation.

Additionally, my findings have some limitations. The purpose of this study was to understand the process of envisioning and enacting inquiry from teachers' perspectives and to learn about their experience rather than examining the influence of those decisions on student achievement or students' attitudes. The question of whether and how teachers' inquiries were successful at improving students' writing or altering students' attitudes or other dispositions toward writing remain outside of the scope of this study. Further studies are needed to address this important line of inquiry. As teachers should be positioned as the ultimate agents of their own ideas for reform, it is my hope that gaining a better understanding of teacher's perspectives on their successes and challenges as well as what informed, supported or hindered their enactment is at least a first step to learning what factors are likely to support positive learning outcomes with students. While I acknowledge these limitations, I contend that this study makes a useful contribution to our understanding of how practicing teachers envision and implement their own inquiry into their practice within reform-oriented contexts.

Implications

Although findings from a case study cannot be generalized to a population, they can be generalized to theoretical propositions and can modify, support, confirm, and challenge beliefs. This study can inform future research, professional developers, and in

particular, community-based professional learning communities such as the Beechwood Writing Project, about how practicing teachers envision and utilize inquiry as a method for improving their teaching practices. Because not enough is known about how practicing teachers' visions are conceptualized for professional learning and used as a driver for practice-based changes, this study's findings make a contribution to this understanding.

This study addressed a gap in the literature about how practicing teachers' visions may be conceptualized and activated through participation in professional learning communities. The research literature suggests that preservice teachers' visions may be activated through teacher education experiences using the visioning protocol and may serve as a guiding force for teachers to not only derive visions for their teaching but also use them to measure their progress toward enactment. This study adds new information about the role of conceptualizing an inquiry within a professional learning community through writing as a mode of learning. Teachers' inquiry focus areas were activated and refined through social interactions and writing as a mode of discovery. Making meaning of their visions through sharing with other teachers and engaging in developing a rationale for their approaches served as a method for making a commitment to their visions as well as provided a means for reflection on their visions and enactments. The one teacher whose vision was less clear went through additional iterations of meaning-making activity that helped to refine and clarify what she was hoping to do. This finding contributes to our understanding of how the process of writing and social interaction within and through writing may provide practicing teachers with a method to conceptualize, examine, and reflect on their work.

This study provides new evidence contributing to the understanding of the role of theoretical perspectives of writing development in the vision-to-enactment process. Although the role of beliefs and values in teachers' efforts to change their practices have been documented in the literature (Blake, 2002; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Kennedy, 2005; Pajares, 1992), this study provides a nuanced finding related to the influence of teachers' theoretical perspectives of writing as a guiding force for their visions and enactments and which also served as a critique of their district's portrayal of writing and professional development. Teachers held their own theoretical positions on writing and viewed the District's position as one that was void of a coherent, theoretical stance, where they were expected to deliver writing tasks without understanding the purpose or being involved in designing the implementation. There is much debate about how we should parse teacher practices in the interest of teacher improvement to meet complex learning outcomes (Kennedy, 2016). The findings of this study suggest that presenting theoretical underpinnings of initiatives and engaging teachers' perspectives rather than ignoring them could serve in the interest of "redefining what it means to help teachers improve" (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017, p. 1). Addressing the theoretical foundations of teachers' beliefs as they are related to curricular reform goals is a first step in helping teachers to identify how their theoretical perspectives inform their practices. The need to treat teachers as theorizers of change rather than technicians of change is an implication of this study.

Implications for Research

Based on the findings presented in this study, I offer the following implications for future research. First, the findings of this study suggested that teachers' participation

in inquiry within a professional learning community played a role in expanding teachers' visions beyond their classroom domains. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) argue that when teachers engage in inquiry as a stance, through "blurring of theory and practice, knowing and doing, conceptualizing and studying, analyzing and acting," teachers may move together for educational change. This study focused on the individual experiences of teachers within their particular teaching contexts. The teachers in this study yearned for meaningful professional learning within their collegial relationships. Additional research that considers both the individual and the collective visions of teachers engaged in inquiry as members of a professional learning community is an area of research that would advance our understanding of how teachers' collective visions might be utilized to enact broader goals for education improvement.

This study also has implications for a related line of inquiry within teacher and practitioner research. The findings of this study suggest that vision could prove a useful lens for practitioner research design, especially in coordination with other practitioner researchers, using action research or self-study methodologies. The teachers in this study valued the opportunity to share their visions, to examine them with another practitioner, and to engage in reflective dialogue, critique, and re-envisioning and considered it a form of professional development. The value that teachers assigned to their roles as participants in this study contributes to the contention that engaging in collaborative research projects utilizing a vision-practice-re-envisioning protocol could be valuable for teacher learning and professional growth. This research would make a valuable contribution to practitioner research of the vision-to-practice process from an emic

perspective, making “visible the ways that students and teachers together construct knowledge and curriculum” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 43).

Finally, the vision-to-practice enactments that demonstrated the most coherence warrant further investigation. When teachers engaged in productive struggle toward aligning elements of their visions and rebalanced the roles of teacher and students, there appeared to be a bi-directional influence. Including student perspectives would provide a valuable missing voice in this line of inquiry. The role of students’ visions for their own learning and perspectives on how their visions contribute to the classroom community is an area that is missing from the discussion of vision and could provide valuable insights into our understanding of “engagement” which is frequently cited as a primary motivator of teachers’ decisions within their classrooms, as it was for the teachers in this study (Kennedy, 2005). How students’ visions interact with teachers’ visions to promote shared ownership within a classroom community is a subject that warrants further investigation.

Implications for Professional Development

Based on the findings of this study, I offer the following implications for teacher professional development. First, the finding of this study support the contention that teachers’ own theories and beliefs are resilient, and that teachers learned and utilized the “content” of the BWP program through their own unique perspectives of writing development as it was filtered through their theoretical lenses. This finding supports research that has documented the role of teachers’ beliefs in the resiliency of practices and the *problem of enactment* (Ball, 1988; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005; Kennedy, 1998; 1999, 2005; Lampert, 2010; Zimmerman, 2017). However, teachers simultaneously adopted new beliefs about how students could

improve that suggested an expanding understanding of theories of writing pedagogy and development. The tension between teachers' new beliefs and resilient beliefs surfaced as a site of productive struggle with the potential for learning. This finding has important implications for program design in the area of writing instruction and within professional development programs such as the one designed by the BWP. While teachers were positioned within the BWP as learners, knowers, and leaders, they were not positioned as theorizers of writing development. The findings of this study suggest that unpacking teachers' theoretical perspectives could afford professional development leaders and teacher participants an opportunity to examine, critique, and evaluate the theories that inform our current practice and assumptions in relation to those that inform our desired practices and desired ways of positioning ourselves in the classroom. Engaging in collegial discussions about reported struggles and tensions between theoretical perspectives, beliefs, and practices warrants consideration for professional development programming. Providing an opportunity for teachers to engage in deconstructing theory and theory building toward new practices could prove a valuable professional learning experience.

A second implication of the findings of this research is related to the differences between how teachers viewed the support provided during the summer and the support they perceived during the school year. The Summer Institute was valuable to teachers' conceptualization of their "pure vision" and allowed them the opportunity to rise above the water of teaching and have a clear view of what they wanted to do. The writing, professional dialogue, and activation of inquiry proved a useful frame that inspired teachers for the entire school year. The school year support, however, did not function as

intended to help teachers with the challenging work of enacting their visions-in-practice. This implication suggests that a different model is needed during the school year for teachers to experience community support but more directly connected to the classroom context. Teachers generally found my presence in their classrooms as a source of support and a way to “keep things in perspective.” They envisioned how a coach within the classroom could be a valuable professional development next step for working through their inquiry and as a complement to their learning in the Summer Institute. Bringing the professional learning experience into the classroom through online tools or in the form of onsite peer-coaching, informal “coaching conversations,” or through collaborative research projects using the vision-practice-re-envisioning protocol could provide direction for reconsidering how professional development might support both professional learning and teacher agency within teachers’ classrooms.

Appendix A: Glossary

Enactment: actions that teachers take to put their visions into practice in their classrooms and broader education contexts.

Inquiry: teachers' own questions and frameworks for understanding and improving their own teaching practice (Cochran-Smyth & Lytle, 1993).

Knowledge-for-practice: knowledge about teaching consists of formal knowledge about the content, foundations of teaching and learning theory, and empirically-based best practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Knowledge-in-practice: knowledge created by teachers' examination of their own teaching practices and engaging in the study of craft through self-reflection and coaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009

Knowledge-of-practice: deep knowledge created through shared inquiry, reflection, and critique of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Problem of enactment: a phenomenon that occurs when teachers appear to embrace a new idea yet continue enacting a previous practice out of habit (Kennedy, 1999).

Re-envisioning: a process of reflection and sharing whereby teachers envision how they would try a different approach to address an identified problem in their enactment of their vision.

Teacher vision: images of teaching practices and roles which serve as a kind of "reach" for practicing teachers in their pursuit of improvement within their classrooms and broader education contexts (Hammerness, 2006).

Vision constellation: a framework used to identify patterns related to the focus, range, and distance of teachers' visions: 1) focus refers to both the center or concentration of interest of their vision as well as the "distinctness or clarity" over what they wanted to do, 2) range refers to the scope or extent of the focus as well as how narrow or broad the field of vision, and 3) distance refers to how much of a "reach" there was between teachers' current practice and their envisioned practice (Hammerness, 2001).

Vision-to-practice process: The iterative process of conceptualizing through interrogation and articulation of ideas, envisioning practices and roles, and then enacting those practices and roles.

Appendix B: Mission of the National Writing Project

Writing in its many forms is the signature means of communication in the 21st century. The NWP envisions a future where every person is an accomplished writer, engaged learner, and active participant in a digital, interconnected world (NWP, 2015).

The National Writing Project was born out of a felt need for community-based professional development for teachers of writing. In 1974, James Gray started the Bay Area Writing Project to address the perceived lack of preparation courses for teachers of writing. Over time, the Bay Area Writing Project grew into a national network known as the National Writing Project now serving thousands of participants each year within its 50-state network of over 200 sites (of which the Beechwood Writing Project is one). Local writing projects are college and university-based and charged with connecting higher education resources and personnel with K-12 teachers and serving their local school districts. The National Writing Project's (NWP) mission is to focus "the knowledge, expertise, and leadership of our nation's educators on sustained efforts to improve writing and learning for all learners" across all disciplines ("About NWP - National Writing Project," n.d.). Through its national infrastructure, the goal of the NWP is to support both the utility of local knowledge and leverage the power of the collective knowledge of its membership. Each site operates as an independent community, yet all sites are bound together by a common program and philosophy that "practice is strengthened when we incorporate multiple ways of knowing that are informed by culture and experience" ("About NWP - National Writing Project," n.d.). With its emphasis on teacher authority and self-directed inquiry, the National Writing Project model stands in

contrast to traditional teacher professional development while it plays a significant role in educational reform efforts (Smith, 1996).

From the beginning, the National Writing Project reversed the top-down model of professional development by putting teacher expertise at the center of the work (Gray, 2000). Utilizing a teachers-teaching-teachers framework, NWP teachers are encouraged to cultivate their expertise and share their successful classroom practices as a means of “cross-pollinat[ing] the successful teaching of writing” (Gray, 2000, p. 54). Although there are commonly held beliefs about the significance of teaching writing as a process and the role of writing in learning, one of the foundational tenets of the writing project is that “there is no right way to teach writing” (Gray, 2000, p. 6). While not prescriptive, the NWP puts emphasis on seeing writing development as a continuum that should begin in the early years and stresses the importance of writing instruction throughout schooling. Perhaps most importantly, the Writing Project recognizes and seeks to develop the interdependence of all writing teachers, Kindergarten through the University level. Through participation in their Writing Project, teachers of writing and across subject areas are able to see the importance of their work to all other teachers of writing and to the collective improvement of practice (Gray, 2000).

One critique of the National Writing Project has been its scale. An emphasis on a national model, it has been argued, could result in the duplication of the top-down approaches to professional development that the NWP mission opposes (Gray, 2000). With that concern in mind, the NWP developed regional and special interest networks including the Rural Sites Network and the Urban Sites Network to be more responsive to special interest and local issues among other initiatives. Another criticism leveraged early

on was the lack of racial and cultural diversity of its membership and leaders. Since the inception of the national model, the NWP has been working to address issues of inclusiveness and diversity. Through attention to access and equity, the National Writing Project today is more representative of the teachers, students, and communities across the country than in the past; however, equitable access for all teachers remains a pressing need.

Appendix C: Research Instruments

Interview Protocol

Interview 1

[Predicted Time: 45 minutes – 1 hour]

Warm-up *Background*

1. I'd like to review information about your teaching background from the survey. (Share summary of teaching background).

RQ3: *personal/ professional development factors*

2. Would you share with me a bit about your teacher education program?
 - How long ago did you receive your teacher training?
3. How was writing instruction approached in your teacher education classes?
 - Was there an emphasis on writing conventions or the writing process, for example or disciplinary literacy?
4. What, if anything, did you take away from that training that you use in your teaching practice?
5. Have you had any other specific training or professional development (besides the BWP) that you feel has contributed to your writing instruction pedagogy?
6. What did you take away from that professional development that you use in your practice?
7. In what ways, if at all, were your beliefs about writing and writing instruction shaped by any of this training?
8. When you applied to the BWP program, what motivated that decision?

RQ1: *vision*

9. I would like to ask you about your vision for your teaching and your classroom and how you would describe that vision. I'm interested in hearing what you hope for even if that might be different from your current experience.
 - How would you describe your vision for your role in your classroom?
 - Walking into your classroom, what would a visitor see you doing that reflects this vision?
 - What is your vision for student learning?
 - Walking into your classroom, what would a visitor see and hear that reflects this vision?
 - What role do students play in the classroom?
 - Do you have a vision for English Language Learners or specific student groups?
 - What does that look like in your teaching practice?
 - How would you describe your vision for your classroom environment?
 - What does that look and feel like for a visitor walking around in your room?

- How would you describe your vision for your instruction or your instructional approach?
 - What topics or texts would students be working on?
 - Why are these topics or texts important for them to learn?
 - What would a visitor see and hear as students were working on these topics?
 - How would you describe your vision for teaching writing?
 - Walking into your classroom, what would a visitor see and hear?
 - What topics or texts would students be writing about?
 - What does writing in your class look like?
10. Would you say that during your career that your vision has stayed the same or has it changed over time?
- How do you account for that change?
11. I'd like to talk more specifically about your particular area you focused on this year for improving your writing instruction coming out of the work that we did together in the BWP program. I am going to refer to this as your inquiry focus area.
- What guided your choice of focus?
 - What else do you think motivated your choice of inquiry focus area?

RQ1 – *Vision*, RQ2 - *Actions*

12. Would you trace for me how your inquiry focus area has evolved this year, from the ideas you had last summer to now?

RQ1 - *Vision*

13. How much of a “reach” has implementing your inquiry focus been for you?
- How new or different would you say your approach has been to what you done in the past?
 - Would you say that it has been an easy reach, within reach, a stretch, or out of reach?

RQ2 – *Perceptions of progress*

14. How would you describe your progress towards implementing your inquiry focus ideas in your classroom this year?
- What else do you envision doing this year to work on this area?

RQ3 – *Supports and barriers*

15. What factors have influenced your progress so far?
- In what way has ____ factor influenced your progress?
 - When you say ____ has influenced your progress, can you provide an example or elaborate on that?

RQ1 – *Vision*

16. In terms of alignment between what your vision and your current teaching practice, at this point in time, how close or distant would you say your current teaching context is to your vision?

17. Have there been other times in your career when you have felt your teaching practice was more aligned with your vision or are you closer to your vision now than in the past?

Closing

18. These are all my questions for this initial interview. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

19. This research will use pseudonyms for all participants. Do you have a name you would like me to use?

Interview Protocol

Pre-Observation Interview

Context

1. I'd like to talk about the lesson that you have planned.
 - Is this a new lesson or a lesson that you have taught before?
 - If you have taught this lesson in the past, how similar or different would you say it is to the past?

RQ1 – *Vision*

2. Can you describe how this lesson is connected or driven by your inquiry focus area?
3. During our last interview, you talked about IDEAS. How do those ideas relate to this lesson?
4. How do you envision students benefitting from this lesson?
5. How will you know if this lesson benefits students?

RQ2 - *Actions*

6. As you envisioned this lesson, did you do anything in particular to prepare?

RQ1 - *Vision*

7. As we take a look at your lesson plans and lesson materials, can you share with me what you are envisioning will happen during the lesson?

RQ1 - *Vision*, Lesson context for observation

8. As we take a look at the lesson plan, will you share with me anything about this lesson that you would describe as a “reform” or “innovation” (i.e., a change from past practice or a new practice in order to improve teaching and/or learning).

RQ1 –*Motivation*

For each of these changes you mentioned, can you share with me what you might have done differently in the past?

What motivated the change to your past way of doing it, specifically?

Lesson Context

RQ 3 - *factors*

9. Can you provide some context for this lesson?
 - How does it fit within your curriculum or specific unit?
 - How does it fit within your school or county literacy plan?
10. Is there anything that you feel is important for me to know about this group of students?
11. Is there anything in particular you would like for me to look for while I am observing?
12. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about this lesson?
13. To teacher: After the lesson, I will ask you: In thinking about how you implemented your inquiry focus area ideas during this lesson, which particular points in the lesson do you want to revisit during our post-observation discussion?

Observation Protocol

Teacher: _____ Observation date: _____
Start Time: _____ End Time: _____
Grade level: _____ Academic level (Honors, Regular): _____ No. of students: _____

Area of focus from pre-observation interview:
Classroom description:

Part 1 - Observation

Time stamp	Observation notes	Commentary

Part 2 – Post-Observation Teacher Input (to be collected in person after the lesson, or by email, text, or phone call as soon as possible following the observation)

To teacher: In thinking about how you implemented your inquiry focus area ideas during this lesson, which particular points in the lesson do you want to revisit during our post-observation discussion?

Interview Protocol
Post-Observation Interview
[Predicted Time: 30 minutes - 45 minutes]

RQ 2 – Teachers’ perceptions

1. Did this lesson proceed as you had envisioned it?
 - In what ways did it proceed as you envisioned it?
 - In what ways did it not proceed as you envisioned it?
2. Let’s take a closer look at the particular points in the lesson that you wanted to revisit. (Share transcriptions of teacher’s nominated points for discussion).

RQ2 – Actions,

RQ3 - Factors

3. I’d like to ask you some questions that I noted during the observation of your lesson to learn more about your decisions during the lesson.

(Refer to transcription and observation notes)

Topics may include:

Why the teacher portrayed subject matter in a particular way.

Why the teacher asked a certain question.

Why the teacher gave a particular direction.

Why the teacher deviated from the lesson plan.

Why the teacher responded to a student in a particular way.

Why the teacher decided to transition from one activity to the next.

RQ 2 – Teachers’ perceptions

4. How would you describe your progress toward implementing your inquiry focus this year?

Interview Protocol

Closing Interview

[Predicted Time: 45 minutes – 1 hour]

RQ3: *personal factors*

1. Would you tell me about your own experiences as a student writer.
 - Did writing come easily to you when you were in school or was it challenging?
2. Did you have a teacher(s) that stands out to you (either positively or negatively) because of the way they approached writing instruction?
3. Can you tell me what it was like for you as a student in that teacher's class? In what ways, if at all, were your beliefs about writing and writing instruction shaped by your experiences as a student?

RQ2: *Teachers' perceptions*

4. I'd like us to take a look at some of the documents that you produced during the PD courses this year for your reflection. (Review rationale for teacher inquiry, inquiry questions, plan for teacher inquiry, reflection).
5. Looking back on the year, I'd like to hear any reflections that you have about how the year went.
6. How do you feel about how your writing instruction went?
7. How do you feel about your specific inquiry focus, in particular?

RQ1: *Vision*

8. Looking back on the year, how would you describe the role of your inquiry focus in your teaching practice this year?
9. Has your inquiry focus area remained the same this year or has it changed?
 - i. In what ways has it changed?

10. I'd like to share notes and some assertions with you from my analysis for you to review for accuracy and any elaboration.

RQ2: *Actions (Connected to Assertions)*

1. In terms of your specific inquiry focus, what, if anything, were the most helpful things you did to move your inquiry focus area into practice in your classroom?
2. Looking back on the year, what, if anything, do you think you did that moved you away from implementing your inquiry focus area in your classroom?

RQ3: *Supports and Barriers (Connected to Assertions)*

1. What were the main factors that supported you as you tried to implement your inquiry focus? These could be personal, inside school, or outside of school factors or other factors.

2. What were the main factors that served as barriers or obstacles as you tried to implement your ideas? These could be personal, inside school, or outside of school factors or other factors.

(If time remains....)

11. In terms of alignment of your vision for your inquiry focus and your teaching practice, how close or distant would you say your current teaching practice is to your vision right now?

12. Have there been other times in your career when you have felt your teaching practice was more aligned with your teacher vision or are you closer to your teacher vision now than in the past?

- When was that?

Those are all the questions that I have. Is there anything else that you want to share with me?

Group Interview Protocol

June 21, 2018

[Predicted Time: 1 hour]

In this group interview, you are encouraged to explore and clarify your views through discussion with one another. The goal is foster diverse points of view and to surface different experiences and opinions that may be triggered through discussion. I have prepared some questions but I also encourage you to feel free to ask your own questions of each other and to raise other issues.

1. (Starter) Can we just go around and remind each other of your teaching positions and what you selected as your focus area for your Teacher Inquiry coming out of our work in the Writing Project this year.
2. I have talked individually with each of you about your broad vision for your teaching, how you have developed your specific inquiry focus across the year, how you envisioned implementing your inquiry ideas, and how you have enacted those ideas in your classrooms. I'm interested in further exploring your theories about the role of teacher vision in teaching
 - First, do you have thoughts about what is the relationship between teacher vision and professional growth?
 - Do you think that teacher vision is **malleable**?
 - Do you think that **teaching experience** plays a role in the vision to practice process?
 - Second, what do you see as the teacher vision to practice process.
 - Where do you see **teacher learning occurring** as an element in the vision to practice process?
 - Do you think that clarity of a teachers' vision is observable in the enactment of that vision in practice?
3. I'd like you to take a look at this illustration as a touchstone for thinking about factors that had a role in your experience for your input. (Share conceptual framework).
 - In the framework, I included the district's literacy plan as a frame containing both your participation in the Writing Project work and also your participation in schoolwide literacy goals. Do you see that as having framed your work this year?
 - If you were asked by an outsider to describe the role of institutional forces or policy on your process of developing and enacting your inquiry focus, what would you say?
4. In this diagram the link between vision and practice is **TAKING ACTION** with the Barriers squeezing these actions and the supports lifting them up. What are your thoughts about this depiction?

5. I would like to share a theme that emerged across the group for further discussion. One of the themes that has emerged that I want to better understand is the challenge of tracing the

What thoughts do you have that you would like to share about that challenge? (obstacles)

- What did you do to try to address this challenge? (actions – enactment)
- As you think about how you would approach this challenge if you confront it next year, what are some of your ideas for addressing this challenge? (vision)

Appendix D: BWP Course Documents Description

Title of Assignment	Program course/ Due Date	Description
Program Goal Statement	April 2017	Teachers included a goal statement for their participation in the BWP Program as a component of their application materials.
Personal Writing	Summer Institute/ July 2017	Teachers selected a personal topic of interest to take through the writing process as members of a writing group.
Personal Writing Reflection	Summer Institute/ July 2017	Teachers described why they selected the topic that they did, what motivated their choice, and reflected on their writing process and what they learned about themselves as writers.
Research Proposal	Summer Institute/ July 2017	Teachers presented their ideas for their inquiry and initial questions based on reflection, reading, research, workshops, and discussions.
Research Plan	Fall Course/ November 2017	Teachers developed questions and sub-questions to guide their inquiry including a research plan and timeline for implementing their inquiry during the year.
Research Data Collection and Analysis	Fall Course/ January 2017	Teachers reported artifacts of data that they had collected and criteria for answering their inquiry questions. Teachers reflected on their inquiry work and next steps.
Teacher Inquiry Workshop (TIW) Presentation	Spring Course/ March 2018	Teachers created a plan for where they were going to deliver their TIW to an audience and developed a PowerPoint presentation and materials.

Appendix E: IRB Approval



1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, MD 20742-5125
TEL: 301.405.4212
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irb@umd.edu
www.umresearchand.edu/IRB

DATE: January 31, 2018

TO: Elizabeth Singleton
FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1176847-2] From Vision to Practice: A Case Study of Experienced Teachers' Writing Instruction Reforms

REFERENCE #:

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: January 31, 2018

EXPIRATION DATE: January 30, 2019

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Prior to submission to the IRB Office, this project received scientific review from the departmental IRB Liaison.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulations.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of January 30, 2019.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Unless a consent waiver or alteration has been approved, Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of seven years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 or irb@umd.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB's records.

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form



Institutional Review Board

1204 Marie Mount Hall • 7814 Regents Drive • College Park, MD 20742 • 301-405-4212 • irb@umd.edu

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Project Title	From Vision to Practice: A Case Study of Experienced Teachers' Writing Instruction Reforms
Purpose of the Study	<p>This research is being conducted by Elizabeth Singleton at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am inviting you to participate in this research project because you are an experienced teacher who has participated in the University of Maryland Writing Project's Fostering Effective Writing Instruction program and has engaged in implementing writing instruction reforms in the classroom during the 2017-2018 school year.</p> <p>The purpose of this research project is to better understand how experienced teachers implement new learning in the area of writing instruction from their own perspectives. A secondary purpose is to uncover what factors provide supports and barriers to the enactment of experienced teachers' envisioned reforms.</p>
Procedures	<p>The procedures for this study involve participating in interviews, sharing documents for analysis, classroom observations, and participating in a group interview.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You will be asked to share and discuss documents created during the 2017-2018 BWP professional development courses during semi-structured interviews. These documents may include application materials, identifying an inquiry focus for writing instruction reforms, your written rationale for selecting your area of inquiry, your inquiry questions, your plan for implementing your inquiry focus, your reflection statement from analyzing student work, your plan for professional development delivery, your vision statements, and an end of cohort reflection, for example. These documents will be used for document analysis purposes and for reference during initial interviews, pre-observation, post-observation, and follow-up interviews.2. You will be asked to engage in a 45-60 minute semi-structured interview where I will ask you questions about your teaching practice, your reasons for applying to the BWP cohort, what you learned during your participation, and what you have applied to your teaching so far this year, for example. All interviews will be audio recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed. For confidentiality, all identifying information will be removed from any

	<p>documents and transcriptions before saving files on a password-protected personal computer. All data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research project or in seven years, whichever comes first.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. You will be asked to choose three lessons during the semester for me to observe your writing instruction or writing activities in your classroom that you feel reflect your participation in an envisioned reform to your writing instruction. A fourth lesson may be added if needed and mutually agreed upon. I will ask you to select the lessons you would like for me to observe. These observations will be audio recorded using a digital voice recorder, and I will take field notes during the observations for post-observation follow-up interviews. 4. Each of the three-four observations will include a 30-45 minute pre-observation semi-structured interview and a 30-45 minute post-observation semi-structured interview. These interviews will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and location. These interviews will be audio recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed. During these interviews, I will ask you questions about choices you made during your lesson, for example. 5. You will be asked to provide any documents that you generated for these lessons (such as lesson plans, writing activities, rubrics, etc.) for document analysis and interview purposes. 6. You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview of 45-60 minutes at the end of the school year to reflect on your experience implementing writing instruction reforms during the year. This interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. 7. You will be asked to participate in a 60-minute group interview with other teachers in the study at the end of the year to identify common themes and clarify experiences. This interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. <p>In total, it is expected that your participation will involve 11 hours, including all interviews and observations between March and June 2018. If a fourth observation is added, your participation will involve approximately 13 hours.</p>
Potential Risks and Discomforts	<p>There may be some minor risks from participating in this research study. You may experience some discomfort reflecting on your teaching practice or having a researcher observe your teaching. However, all interviews will be semi-structured, and you will not be required to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering. You will also be given the option of not sharing any documents or lesson artifacts that you are uncomfortable sharing. You will have authority to select the specific lessons that you would like for me to observe. I will also make it a practice to be an unobtrusive observer in the classroom so as to have as little impact as possible on the classroom climate. There is also a slight risk that you may be indirectly identified through your affiliation with the University of Maryland Writing Project. Your identity will be protected to the maximum degree possible.</p>
Potential Benefits	<p>There are no direct benefits to participation in this study. Although not a direct benefit, I hope that you will gain insights into your own teaching practice through opportunities to discuss and examine your practice with me and with fellow teachers. As a form of reciprocity, I will be happy to</p>

	<p>serve as a resource with professional tasks while I am at your school. This assistance might include discussing your teacher evaluation artifacts or helping you with technology. It is also my hope that you will derive indirect benefits from contributing to the collective knowledge about teaching practice, and that in the future, other people might benefit from this study through gaining a better understanding of teachers' processes and perspectives on implementing their own writing instruction reforms.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing all collected data and documents in a secure location in password protected files. Digital audio recording will be transcribed and the audio files and transcriptions will be stored on password-protected personal computers and a password-protected Dropbox folder. The only person with access to the materials will be the researcher involved in the study and accessed for coding and analysis purposes.</p> <p>In keeping with standard research practice, all data will be archived (but kept confidential) for 7 years or until research publications are complete (whichever occurs first). After that time, all data I have collected will be destroyed.</p> <p>Before saving any documents related to this study, any identifying information will be removed. You will not be identified by name in reporting of the data without your express written permission. If I write a report, presentation, or article about this research project, pseudonyms will be used to protect the confidentiality of participants.</p> <p>Your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. There is a slight possibility that you may be indirectly identified through their affiliation with the University of Maryland Writing Project. Because the researcher is known within the National Writing Project community as a Co-Director of the University of Maryland Writing Project (UMdWP), the specific site name of the UMdWP will be used in presentations directed specifically to the National Writing Project community only. For other purposes, such as publications outside of the NWP, a pseudonym will be used for the UMdWP site to maximize confidentiality for participants.</p> <p>Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if I am required to do so by law.</p>
Compensation	<p>Any participants who complete the entire study will receive an \$80.00 Amazon gift card at the conclusion of this study as a thank-you. No partial payments will be awarded. You will be responsible for any taxes assessed on the compensation.</p> <p>If you will earn \$100 or more as a research participant in this study, you must provide your name, address and SSN to receive compensation.</p> <p>If you do not earn over \$100 only your name and address will be collected to receive compensation.</p>

Right to Withdraw and Questions	<p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. Your participation or non-participation will not negatively nor positively affect your relation and standing with the University of Maryland Writing Project and its programs.</p> <p>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elizabeth Singleton Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership College of Education 2311 Benjamin Building College Park, MD. 20742 443-858-5291 elizabeth.m.singleton@gmail.com</p>	
Participant Rights	<p>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>	
Statement of Consent	<p>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</p>	
	<p>___ I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study. ___ I do not agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.</p>	
Signature and Date	NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]	
	SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	
	DATE	

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